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MACLEAN'S

CANADA'S MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

JUL. 24th 2006

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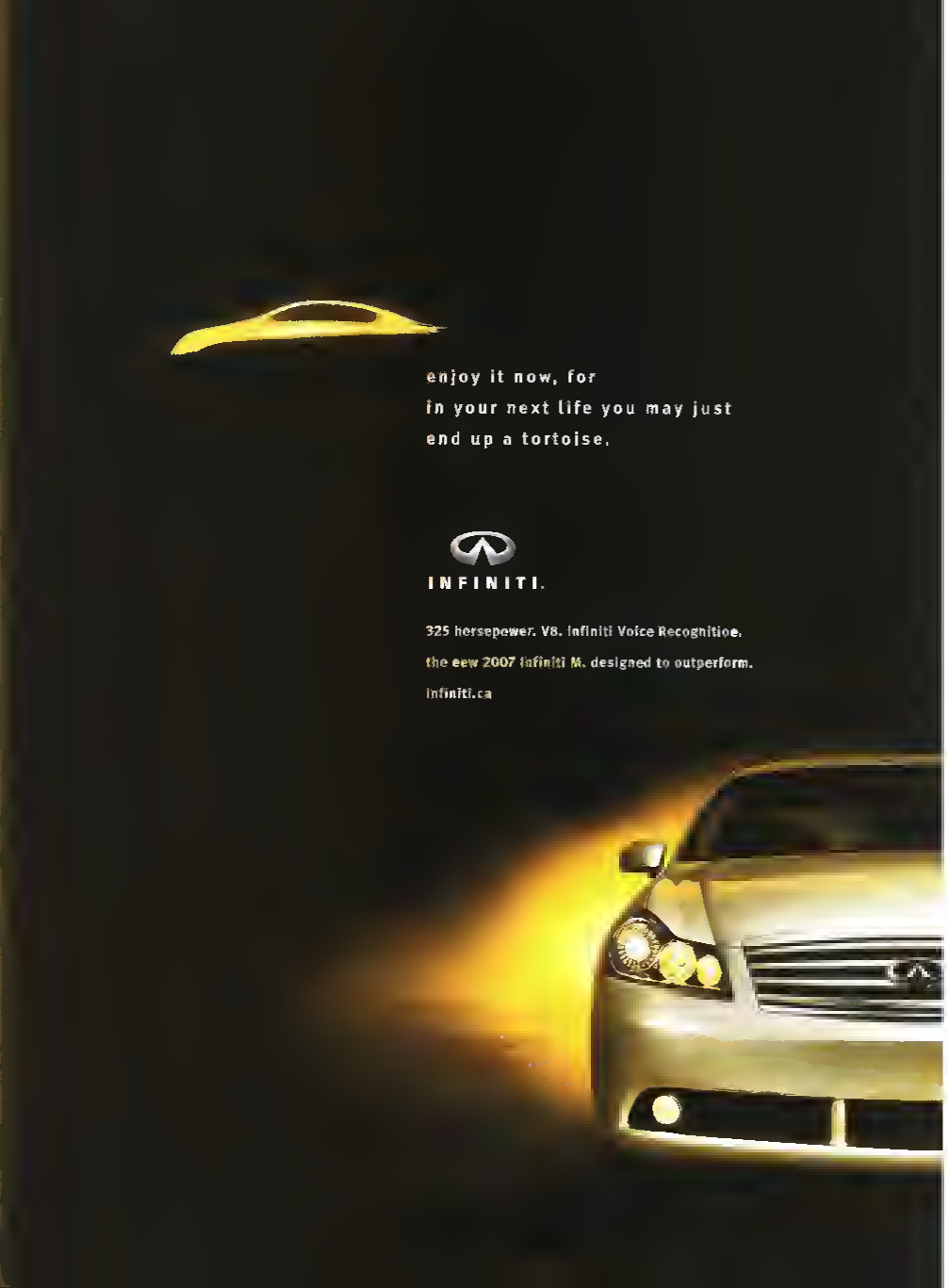
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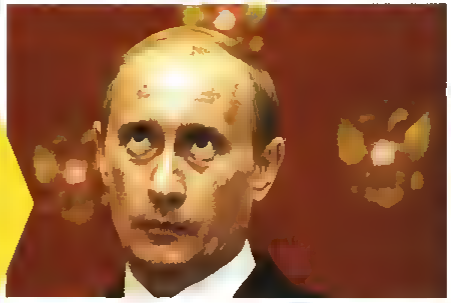
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ACCEPT problems, 'take the consequence, stay the course,' one diplomat advised

Doing our grievous duty in Afghanistan

Any nation facing the heart-rending task of burying its war dead inevitably questions the cause for which its soldiers gave their lives. So it was this week, as Canada mourned the loss of Cpl. Anthony Boneca, a 21 year-old reservist who was killed in a firefight with Taliban gunmen in a village west of Kandahar. He was due to return home to Thunder Bay, Ont., in just three weeks.

In the aftermath of this tragedy, some have revived the argument that Canada has no place in a war zone, and that the struggle against the Taliban isn't our fight anyway. To those arguments we offer the reply put forth this week by Tom Koenigs.

A career German bureaucrat and diplomat, Koenigs is now serving as the United Nations' special representative for Afghanistan. He brings decades of experience in human rights and humanitarian aid programs to his current assignment, and Monday he issued a blunt call to the world community: please don't turn your back on one of the most desperate places on earth. Afghanistan, he argued, presents a daunting and dangerous challenge—a tangle of competing interests, religious rivalries and poverty. Both the resiliency of the Taliban and the demands of reconstruction were underestimated. Strategic errors by Western allies have heightened the risks. "These are difficult times," he said. "But backing away is not an option."

It's a call that Canada desperately needs to hear, especially at moments like these. What Canada, NATO and the UN are attempting is unprecedented in Afghanistan's troubled history. Our troops are there to rebuild a failed state that had become a breeding ground for the world's most virulent strains of fundamentalist hatred and terror.

If Canada and the rest of the world were to back away now, Afghanistan would unquestionably lapse back into the same archaic wasteland that it was in 2001. The proper course, Koenigs said, is for Canada and other coalition members to accept that "we have problems, [and] take the consequence ... more commitment, adjust strategy and stay the course."

This week, Britain committed an additional 900 troops to their Afghan deployment, and now expects to have 4,500 troops on the ground by October, to crush an increasingly emboldened and organized insurgency. Other nations may well have to follow suit, and aid organizations will have to increase their efforts to help stabilize the situation on the ground, and win the support of Afghan civilians who've grown impatient with the pace of recovery.

Cpl. Boneca's loss brings Canada's death toll in Afghanistan to 17 since 2002. It's a grievous cost that's sure to climb before our mission is complete. The only way to adequately pay tribute to that sacrifice is to follow Koenigs' advice, harden our resolve, and make sure the job in Afghanistan gets done. M

SERGEANT CAROLE MORISSETTE

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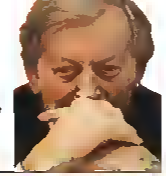
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'Knowing that Ken Thomson had spent $641 million, I sent him a Ronald McDonald watch'



MAKING THE GRADE

IN SPITE OF your findings that students at small universities are generally more satisfied than those at big institutions ("No, this time we'll test you," University Student Issue, June 26), I appreciate my alma mater, the University of Toronto. I am currently attending the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich after graduating from mechanical engineering at U of T, and despite my undergrad whining about teaching assistants, assignments and labs, the quality of the educational experience there was miles above the norm at one of the supposedly best schools in Europe. Now I wish that the fellows here could get their act together.
Nic Piatkowski, Zurich, Switzerland

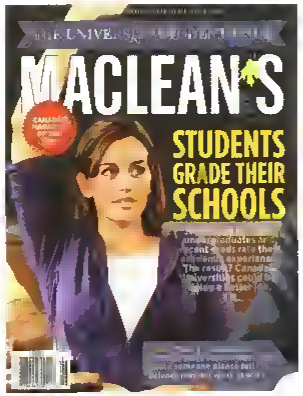
YOUR SURVEY has confirmed what I have suggested to advice seekers for nearly 50 years: if your program is available in a smaller university, go there because you will get a better education and your professors will know you by name. My basic contention is that in most universities the teaching-focused approach brings few rewards to the teacher. Appointments, promotions and merit increments are almost always reserved for those doing research. "Publish or perish" seems to be the guiding principle of faculty evaluation committees. Unless good teachers are rewarded, the importance of teaching will remain on the back burner.
Lochan Bakshi, Professor Emeritus, Athabasca University, Edmonton

WHERE WERE YOU in 1991 when I was choosing a school? I attended the University of Calgary and was not surprised to see it near the bottom of your results. I can honestly say I was not inspired, moved or impressed by any of my forgettable instructors at U of C. I came from the Yukon and chose U of C because it was relatively close and Alberta had no sales tax. I know your article will help others make wiser decisions than I did.
Duncan John Harwood, Oslo, Norway

I WAS DISHEARTENED to read that the University of Western Ontario was named a favoured institution by first year students. I was forced to go to UWO because I grew up in London and my parents said they couldn't afford to send me anywhere else. I believe at a less pompous institution an instructor might have taken an interest in my abilities. As a high school teacher, I advise my students to choose any university over UWO.
Angela St. Michéal, London, Ont.

TURN ON THOSE SAD SONGS

WRITER BRIAN RETHUNE'S and author Tom Reynolds' shared contempt for the likes of Anne Murray and Mariah Carey ("A brief history of melodic misery," Music, June 26) reminds me of an old Lawrence Welk quip that everyone hated him except the public. I suspect these two know as little about Carey as they claim she knows about some of the music



she performs. Carey only occasionally does remakes, "heart grinding" or otherwise. Her normal category is that of a singer songwriter who has evolved from the middle-of-the-road genre to more of a rhythm and blues style. Oh, and that "bloated choir" in Carey's 1993 rendition of *Without You* consisted of her overdubbed voice and three backup singers.
Chris Carss, Chemainus, B.C.

THOMSON AND TIMEPIECES

I READ with interest Peter C. Newman's article about Ken Thomson ("Goodbye to a gentle giant," Profile, June 26). Thomson was a valued friend and a true gem of an individual. I have a slight correction. Thomson never called to ask me for anything. When we first met, I had a McDonald's watch on, and in answer to his question, "What do you do, George?" I showed him the watch and said I work for this company. His response was "Gee, it's really neat looking." Seeing his interest in the watch and knowing the day before he had spent $641 million on a corporate takeover, I immediately sent him a Ronald McDonald watch with a note that jokingly said, "Now that you've spent all your money, wear this watch and it will be a constant reminder of the one place in the world that you can eat where the price is reasonable and the food is consistently good." For years, whenever new fun McDonald's watches would come out, I'd send one to Ken and he'd periodically wear them and would always write me a wonderful note of thanks, often critiquing the design of the watch.
George A. Cohon, founder, McDonald's Canada /McDonald's Russia, Toronto

RIGHTING WRONGS

I APPLAUD the Canadian government's continued efforts to obtain the release of Iranian-Canadian philosopher Ramin Jahanbegloo, a man whose only crime is that he's a thinker ("A prisoner's desperate hope, and brave words," World, July 1). His arrest and detention by the predators who pose as prosecutors in Iran is a sorry story. May efforts to free him pay off, and may those who are responsible for the murder of photojournalist Zahra Kazemi be brought to justice.
Mahasti Afshar, Los Angeles

I AM PLEASED to see that Darfur is getting more coverage ("Remedial math and the Canadian Forces," National, June 5), but why does it take three years for a genocide to be noticed? I hope this new awareness moves us to stop the mutilations, rapes and killings. Let's not have a repeat of Rwanda. Never again shouldn't mean until next time.
Barbara Frensch, Burlington, Ont.

BOMBARDIER AND BLAME

THANK YOU for your rebuttal of Laurent Beaudoin's attempt to blame the Bank of Canada for his company's substandard performance ("Bombardier's always-outstretched hands," From the editors, June 12). As a Canadian businessman, I have always wondered what secrets Bombardier held that made it so easy for it to tap government for huge sums, seemingly at will, over several decades. In most companies, management performance is based on corporate profitability, stability and growth. With a record such as



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ROGERS
You World Right Now

Bombardier's, the entire management team would likely have been gone by now. However, it appears that its performance criteria may be based on the ability to plunder the public purse. It's time to tell Bombardier to pull its own weight.
G P James, Edmonton

I AM SO GLAD someone has had the courage to draw attention to Bombardier's greed. Now how about Magna Corporation? How about Art Canada?
Rita Williams, Guelph, Ont.

NOW YOU'RE TALKING

AFTER READING Kenneth Whyte's Q&A with author Stephen Miller, I wanted to say thank you for illuminating the problem of the lost art of conversation in our culture today (Interview, June 12). I am often struck by how few people cultivate themselves to become interesting people. Women are pathetically boring with their obsession to detail a laundry list of their inner feelings. Men fall in that many of them don't read literary fiction, foolishly believing it is only for women. A cultivated person travels, reads, knows art, history, religion, politics and geography. But to cultivate ourselves is foreign. Instead, we have become a nation of me's and I's.
Irena Karshenbaum, Calgary

READERS LAMENTING the loss of good conversation may want to start up a philosopher's café (*www.philosopher.org*) in their communities. These groups provide a venue for the very type of face-to-face socialization that Whyte describes. In London, we have been running one for more than five years, first at a bookstore and now at the downtown library where I work. The people who attend always comment on how refreshing it is to have meaningful conversation in these times when cyber-communication seems to be the norm.
Jacqui Denomme, London, Ont

HBO AND *COJONES*

CONGRATULATIONS TO *Maclean's* on being named Canada's Magazine of the Year. That's the good news. Now, tell me why you continue shilling for HBO to be included on Canadian television. That's the bad news.
Russ Germain, Toronto

I AM DELIGHTED with your newfound *cojones*. Congratulations for bringing Mark Steyn to a national Canadian audience on a weekly basis. He and Barbara Amiel are your two most incisive commentators, and I now buy *Maclean's* for the savoury pleasure of their articulate destruction of the long-cherished assumptions of linguine-spined leftists.
Dave Sanderson, Barrie, Ont

MACLEAN'S

KEN WHYTE

ROGERS

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ROGERS
Your World Right Now

Stephen Harper's new game: Hide-the-Priority



This week's tale is really quite odd

I have here the July issue of *Report Magazine*, a conservative journal published nine times a year out of Edmonton The magazine's president, Curtis Stewart told me its paid circulation is about 10,000 and it has several regular contributors One of them is the Prime Minister of Canada.

In his latest column, Stephen Harper offers an update from Ottawa "It's been quite a tide," the PM reports Since the election, the new Conservative government has made progress "on all of out five priorities—from cleaning up the federal government, to cutting taxes, cracking down on crime, supporting families, and strengthening out country at home and around the world."

Read that list again.

Notice anything?

Maybe not if you don't live in Ottawa But in the capital, everybody who read that list spotted it immediately Harper is playing Hide the-Priority And he's being ptetty clumsy about it.

The fifth item in his list *was never among the five priorities the Conservatives campaigned on* The fifth Conservative campaign priority was "work with the provinces to establish a Patient Wait Times Guarantee." Harpet has replaced it with this business about "strengthening out country"

And it's not a typo He lists his priorities newly amended, at the top of his column Then he lists them again further down There's the federal accountability act ("cleaning up the federal government"), the GST cut, the tough-on-crime stuff, the $1,200 in annual payments to parents of young children And then once again, where health care used to be Harper announces he's "begun work on uniting the country and making sure Canada's voice is heard internationally."

"Of course, the usual gang of anti-Conservative pundits and politicians don't like what we're doing," Harper writes "But they were never with us to begin with." Actually I was That's how I know he's lying now I was with Harper in Winnipeg last Dec 2, when he promised the Canadian people a health care wait-list guarantee I was in Ottawa on Jan 2 when he made health care, not Canada's international tole, one of his government's first five priorities I was in Ottawa on April 4, when Michaelle Jean read this Throne Speech commitment on behalf of Harpet's new government. "It is time Canadians received the health care they have paid for The government will engage the provinces and territories on a patient wait times guarantee for medically necessary services."



What happened to establishing a wait-times guarantee? That promise has disappeared.

Now, progress on four promises out of five is ptetty good Harper told interviewers as early as January the wait times guatantee would take longer Maybe he'll get right to it after the summer break? But that's not what he writes in his column. He actually lists his government's next projects—reducing "high taxes and red tape", raising the age of sexual consent; examining "options for democratic reform" such as an elected Senate, and "strengthening the ability of our armed forces."

But nowhere in the column do the words "health care," "wait times" or any synonym appeat Suddenly this isn't just the laggard among the first five priorities now it's not even among the top dozen

The *Report Magazine* column isn't an anomaly It's part of a trend. You can still find the health care commitment if you go looking for it on government websites But it has vanished from the government's "push" product—the messages it sends out through speeches, broadcasts and written opinion articles During a cabinet meeting in Quebec City at the end of June, the PM read a statement congratulating himself for "significant progress in addressing the priorities of Canadians." He listed four of the five priorities, but not wait times

Why? I called the offices of four provincial health ministers All told me the same thing that the basis of the Harper government's health care policy is Paul Martin's 2004 health care deal with the provinces That accord sought to measure and shorten wait times But Harpet (and his minister Tony Clement, who has been looking a bit harried lately) wants to add a new requirement to that deal—the guarantee that ironclad health care *deadlines* will be met—without adding a dime to pay for them Nice Harper wants the provinces to provide more service than they agreed, but he refuses to pay more than Martin agreed No wonder the file is dead in the water The last time Tony Clement said anything in public about what used to be a priority, he was reduced to urging the provinces to "get off the pot."

I asked Sandra Buckler, the Prime Minister's communications director, why her boss is now pretending he never made a wait-times commitment to the Canadian people Her answer, in its entirety: "The Prime Minister is pleased with the progress being made by Minister Clement concerning the wait times guarantee."

The guarantee he now pretends he never made. M

ON THE WEB *For more Paul Wells, visit his blog at* www.macleans.ca/inklesswells

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Possessing an ugly soul is not a crime



BARBARA AMIEL

For a crime, two elements must be present. One is a criminal act, the other is a criminal mind. Without both there is no crime. Dropping a suitcase on someone's foot is assault if you intend it and an accident if you don't. But no matter how much you intend to drop that suitcase on someone's foot, until you try to carry it out, it isn't a crime, only a daydream, a fantasy. The recent arrests of alleged terrorists calls for a reminder of this basic tenet of our law.

Those arrests—for alleged plots in Toronto, Miami and New York City—are part of a trend to pick up suspected terrorists before any criminal act takes place. In last week's alleged Islamist plot to blow up train tunnels between New York and New Jersey, early reports say the suspects never met, did not acquire explosives, and had not even visited the target sites. They had corresponded in Internet chat rooms. It is likely that the intelligence services monitoring those chat rooms have the alleged ringleader, Assem Hammoud, in Beirut telling his cybermates the sorts of things that Toronto's 17 terrorist suspects chattered away about online. How they hate America, Jews and the West. How they would like to blow our culture of infidels to bits and, for starters, cut off the PM's head and flood lower Manhattan. Cool, as the Toronto accused might say in their curious mix of contemporary lingo and religious asides. May Allah give us strength.

That sort of talk might justify a charge of conspiracy. But even that charge may be problematic. In last month's Toronto arrests, the accused actually met and shot guns in the woods, to the mystification of nearby Washago, Ont., residents who watched what one grocery clerk tactfully described as these "different-looking men."

The RCMP monitored the activities, but no serious charge can be laid against people target-shooting in the countryside. After two years of surveillance, the group allegedly purchased what they believed to be explosives—from the RCMP. One can speculate whether the idea originated with the accused or the intelligence services, but, hey, three tonnes of ammonium nitrate can make one hell of a lot of bombs and a "controlled buy" took place. *Inshallah.*

Having an *agent provocateur* set up a crime is dubious. Still, our courts give wide latitude to sting operations that in my view more closely resemble entrapment. We dress up policewomen as prostitutes to entrap johns and have police pose as addicts to ensnare dealers. I'm not a fan of prostitution or dope peddling, but even less of entrapment. Operations in which the police target susceptible persons in order to seduce them into criminal acts does not seem compatible with the administration of justice.

Defining a criminal act has become fuzzier, given the existence of the Internet. The Net permits a window into users' souls, including remarkably ugly ones—but having an ugly soul is no crime. People chat away, often using pseudonyms, under the illusion of maintaining their privacy. They talk as if they were confessing to their diary or best friend, but actually they are addressing the masses of cyberspace who peer through this Internet window and mind read—including those who make mind reading their profession for intelligence or security reasons.

From an intelligence point of view, the benefit is obvious: you don't need moles. People who think in a certain way will simply reveal themselves. But how do you tell conspirators from fantasists? Fantasy is a flower, sometimes dark, sometimes beautiful, but it blooms in the mind. The mind has always been off limits to the authorities in a democracy. Punishing people for what they think rather than

Although every terrorist starts as a fantasist, not every fantasist turns into a terrorist

what they do is "thoughtcrime," straight out of George Orwell's nightmare novel, *1984*.

Though every terrorist starts as a fantasist, not every fantasist becomes a terrorist. Odious as it is to fantasize about killing thousands in lower Manhattan, there is a significant danger in allowing the authorities to treat fantasy as an actual crime, even if it is a bloodthirsty, disgusting fantasy and even if it is being discussed with other people. The train tunnel plot may be more than fantasy, but if early reports are to be credited, we have no idea if we're facing a plot or a daydream, terrorists at a talking stage or fantasists talking to each other.

This same Internet throws a sharp light on other problems. What can be seen time and again on various sites is that Islam, a great religion, has as some of its most devoted followers people whose fantasy is the mass murder of innocents—women, children, non-combatants. I can't think of any other ideology or religion whose believers—even the most perverted—consider themselves martyrs for committing suicide in order to kill random shoppers or commuters. Japan's notorious kamikaze pilots in the Second World War targeted battleships, which is not to defend their actions, but simply to note the huge moral difference between targeting a battleship and a subway car.

Islamists may wish to destroy our liberal society, but till now we have not considered exempting them from its protection. In an age when we can look into minds and identify evil, how are we going to reconcile the safety of our society with the procedures we cherish? We seem to be in the process of redefining what constitutes a crime so we can take preventative measures and cut off bad thoughts before they become father to bad acts.

I don't know the solution, but a beginning is to acknowledge the problem. Pretending the dilemma doesn't exist won't do. Following the Toronto arrests, lawyers complained they couldn't get private access to their clients. Short-circuiting our values can lead only to one scenario: we pre-empt our enemies to create a nightmare society, almost all on our own. M



BRAMPTON, Ont.: terror suspects in court

GEOFF ROBINS/AFP



STORY OF THE WEEK—ANOTHER LOST SOLDIER

Cpl Anthony Joseph Boneca, a 21-year-old reservist from Thunder Bay, Ont., was killed in a firefight with Taliban insurgents west of Kandahar city on the morning of July 9, making him the 17th Canadian soldier to die in Afghanistan. Two others suffered injuries later that day. Boneca, who was on his second tour in the country, was praised by military officials for his "heroic efforts" to help protect the Afghan people. His body was expected to be returned to Canada on July 12.

Good news

A hunger for justice

Supporters of Iranian-Canadian philosopher Ramin Jahanbegloo, who was arrested in Tehran in April and is being held in prison without charges, are becoming increasingly vocal. On July 14, hundreds of international protesters seeking his release will launch a global hunger strike in front of the United Nations building in New York. Top Middle East scholars from Harvard, where Jahanbegloo served as a fellow in 1999, are also lending their voices to a petition calling for his freedom. "He is not only intellectually outstanding but also a staunch advocate of non-violence and an able spokesperson for the great cultural wealth of the Iranian tradition," the petition reads. "Knowing his character we very much doubt that he has committed any crime."

A foot in the door

U.S. President George W. Bush told Prime Minister Stephen Harper last week that he will consider delaying new rules requiring travellers to have passports when they cross land borders, provided Congress agrees. According to Republican Thomas Reynolds, who plans to introduce legislation in the House that would delay the planned January 2008 start date, such support may be within reach. The news is more welcome than ever. When a Canadian government report on the potential economic fallout of the new law was recently obtained by reporters, much of it was censored. We can only assume that the blacked-out bits weren't entirely favourable.

A good friend to have

Japan—famous, at least in recent decades, for its pacifism—has emerged as an unlikely leader in the campaign to punish North Korea for test-firing seven missiles earlier this month. Not only is Tokyo urging the UN Security Council to impose additional sanctions against Kim Jong Il's reclusive regime, but Japanese officials are openly discussing the possibility of a pre-emptive strike. It is a bold suggestion, especially considering that the country's constitution prohibits the use of force to settle international disputes. But at least Japan—unlike other Asian nations—understands that threats should be confronted.

A star is a star

Last weekend, *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest* raked in over US$135 million in North America, destroying the box office record previously held by *Spider-Man*, which grossed US$115 million on its opening weekend in 2002. The success of *Pirates*—along with other recent box office hits, including *Superman* and *The Da Vinci Code*—suggests that, contrary to what movie critics and cultural theorists have been forecasting, mass-market, big-budget, middle-brow entertainment is alive and thriving. Just because anyone with a digital camera and a YouTube password can make a movie (see "Suddenly we're all celebrities," p. 50), doesn't mean they deserve an audience. The people have spoken. Johnny Depp wins.

FACE OF THE WEEK



ORANGE CRUSH. Ukrainian lawmakers come to blows in parliament over who will be the next PM

SERGEY STAROSTENKO/UFI

A WEEK IN THE LIFE

New Mexican president-elect Felipe Calderon walked a fine line in the wake of a narrow and contested victory in the July 2 vote. On the one hand, to burnish his legitimacy, he accepted a congratulatory call from George W. Bush. On the other, he quickly warned that he was not going to be Washington's lapdog.

Bad news

They're all fired

The world seems to be going projectile crazy. Last week, the headlines were dominated by North Korea's series of missile tests, which heightened global tensions and set off a flurry of high-level hand-wringing. Back in April, Iran claims to have tested a new high-speed torpedo capable of eluding radar. And on Sunday, India tested a nuclear-capable missile, intended to show it could reach not just rival Pakistan, but China, too. Time to reconsider our position on missile defence, Mr. Harper.

Not to be crude

It was a tough week in the search for alternatives to conventional crude oil. First, former U.S. vice-president Al Gore launched a broadside attack on the Alberta oil sands, noting that processing the oil sands requires vast amounts of natural gas and tears up the landscape. It is not, he says, a viable solution to America's reliance on Middle Eastern oil. Gore is a proponent of ethanol, a gasoline replacement derived from corn. But a U.S. study released this week found that ethanol only reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 12 per cent compared to gasoline because it requires large quantities of conventional oil to be processed. Also, even if the U.S. dedicated all of its corn to making ethanol, it would only satisfy 12 per cent of the country's gas demand. Talk about an inconvenient truth.

Severely useless

On Monday, Britain unveiled the country's new five-point terror alert status system, based on the U.S. model. Unfortunately, the new U.K. system makes use of the same linguistic ambiguities that made the American terror alert system the butt of a thousand late-night talk show jokes. The new system will replace the old seven-point model that came under fire last summer when, days before the London terrorist attacks, officials reduced the threat level from "severe general" to "substantial." Evidently, nobody knew what to do. Of course, the implications of a shift from "severe" to "critical" are crystal clear.

Speaking of useless...

London's *Observer* announced that the American male is in the midst of a "Renaissance." *Superman* is once again flying across silver screens, it noted. "Frature," the male counterpart to chick lit that honours sex and beer, is emerging as a popular genre. "What appeals now," they write, "is not caring and sharing metrosexuality, but raw old-fashioned manhood." Unfortunately, it may be too late for such a reversal. Scientists in Germany reported this week that they've devised a method for growing sperm from embryonic stem cells. In other words, just as men appear to be reclaiming their powerful position in society, science has rendered them redundant. How's that for a kick in the pants.

Still no HBO

With a whopping 95 nominations, HBO has emerged as the darling of this year's Emmy Awards. *The Sopranos*, the network's flagship series, was nominated for best drama. *Curb Your Enthusiasm* earned a nod for best comedy, and *Six Feet Under*'s Peter Krause is up for best lead actor in a drama. Trailing HBO, ABC and CBS, both of which are available in Canada, received 64 and 47 nominations, respectively. Not bad. But they're no HBO. M

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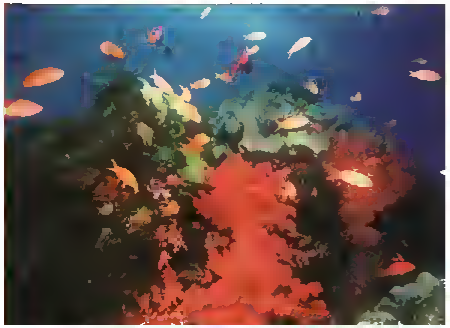
Post Selects. So very select.

7 DAYS



THE WEEK AHEAD...MEMORIALS AND MEETINGS

Memorial services have been organized for Calgary, Montreal and Brampton, Ont., by the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada this weekend to honour Muslims throughout the world who have been killed or oppressed. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Stephen Harper leaves for Britain for bilateral talks with Prime Minister Tony Blair and, along with wife Laureen, meets with the Queen at Buckingham Palace. This weekend he'll travel to St. Petersburg for the G8 summit.



HOPE for the world's coral lies in nurseries and a lot of cement

WILD KINGDOM

Share the pain

Mice feel bad for one another. Previously, empathy had been believed to be the sole province of primates, but new research at McGill University shows that mice feel pain more acutely when a cage mate is undergoing the same experience. A research team fed mice vinegar, prompting mild stomach aches. Mice that did not know one another wriggled in discomfort less than did cage mates that knew one another. Scientists believe that the reaction was not sympathy for the tummy troubles of another so much as empathic imitation, akin to one person's yawning prompting a yawn in another person.

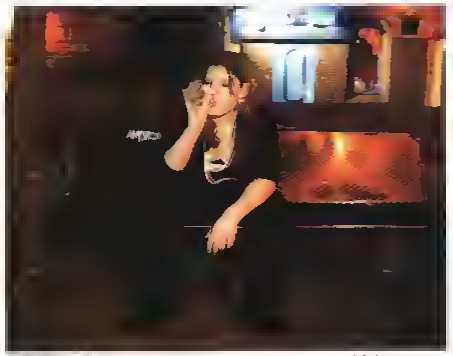
Urban jungle

City wildlife, often presumed to consist of little more than sparrows, starlings and rodents, is actually more diverse than believed. Sponsored by the U.S. National Parks Service, a recent 30-hour "BioBlitz" of the Potomac River gorge, which passes through Washington, enumerated more than 1,000 species, including a very rare snail and a fly found nowhere else along the U.S. eastern seaboard.

DISCOVERY

Coral intensive care

Notortously fragile, one-third of the world's coral reefs are either dead or dying. But now researchers have learned that intensive care can reverse their decline dramatically. One approach has been for divers to rescue fragments from damaged reefs, ranging in size from a few inches to a metre wide. The pieces are nurtured in marine nurseries where they are supplied with a diet of plankton and coddled with controlled salinity and water temperature. Divers then glue the colonies back onto reefs using hydraulic cement or epoxy putty. Where ships have gouged reefs, concrete hemispheres with holes in them serve as scaffolds on which to glue the coral.



AMONG British teens, middle-class girls are apt to drink more

MORTALITY

Common suspicions

Paranoid fear and suspicion is found in up to one third of people, a surprising new study says. Four in 10 have marked worries about negative comments being made about them; 27 per cent says they believe people are deliberately trying to irritate them; one fifth worry about being observed, and five per cent believe there may be a conspiracy to harm them.

Tender defence

Marinades may do more than make meat tender, they could actually cut the toll that cholesterol takes. Scientists in Taiwan soaked eggs and ground pork in soy sauce, sugar or both, and found that marinades significantly reduced the formation of cholesterol oxidation products (COPs), created when cholesterol-laden foods are heated. Marinades, especially sugars, were found to create "browning reaction products," which served as antioxidants that neutralized COPs.

Protein warning

Can Alzheimer's be predicted by your blood? Epidemiologists in the Netherlands have tracked levels of two blood protein fragments, known as amyloid fragments, which are known to form plaques on the brains of Alzheimer's patients. In a sample of 6,700 volunteers, it was found that those people with high levels of Beta 1-40 amyloid fragment and low levels of Beta 1-42 were 10 times as likely to go on to develop dementia. Although it is not yet proven, the researchers suggest that the low level of Beta 1-42 may indicate that those fragments are being deposited in the brain. Despite the new analysis, however, a reliable blood test for Alzheimer's remains a distant goal.

Is B.O. the new Off?

Two perils of hot summer evenings may cancel each other out: mosquitoes and malodorous people (malodorous at least to mosquitoes). Scientists believe that people who never get bitten seem to produce chemical odours that skeeters find vile, but humans may not even notice. The chemicals, which researchers are isolating, seem to inform mosquitoes that the blood of the carriers isn't suitable and they keep away. By synthesizing the body chemical, it may be possible to create a repellent.

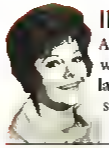
KIDS TODAY

Posh girls drink

A probe of the drinking habits of teenaged girls has yielded startling results: although girls aged 11 to 16 start drinking alcohol later than boys of the same age group, they quickly catch up and even pass males in the quantity consumed and in the kinds of behaviour that people typically regret the morning after. A study of teens in England and Wales shows that whites drink significantly more than blacks and Asians, and that three-quarters of kids from affluent homes are more likely to drink than those from working-class households. One quarter of girls who drink say they later regretted kissing someone while they were drunk and also admitted to walking in unsafe, dark areas while drunk.

JEFF J MITCHELL/REUTERS (BOTTOM)

INA FASSBENDER/REUTERS



IN PASSING...KASEY ROGERS

An actress, Rogers played Miriam, the murdered wife in Alfred Hitchcock's *Strangers on a Train*, and later appeared in the sitcom *Bewitched*. In the 1970s, she was so beguiled by motocross she helped found the sport's first women's league.

IN OTHER NEWS

Send out the clowns

Rampant coulrophobia—morbid fear of clowns—prompted promoters of a rock festival in Britain to change this year's events. Organizers of Bestival had planned a circus theme on the Isle of Wight and encouraged ticket holders to dress up in clowns' outfits. It seems such appearances spark childhood memories of clowns who turned out to be more fearsome than funny. Bestival's promoters feared mass panic after many ticket holders complained.



FEAR OF CLOWNS prompted a rock festival revamp

POLL WATCH

Insulin shock

Canadians with type II diabetes have astonishing levels of ignorance about their condition and the value of insulin in treating it. A poll by Ipsos-Reid for a drug company found that only a quarter of type II patients have ever even discussed insulin with their doctors, and they have many serious misconceptions about it. Seven out of 10 patients who don't use insulin say they're uncomfortable with the idea of using it, while 85 per cent believe their condition is not serious enough to warrant its use. Fully one-third believe incorrectly that insulin can rob them of their eyesight, and 15 per cent believe that it could actually make their diabetes worse.

Parking contempt

The worst offenders for parking among United Nations diplomats in New York are those who come from countries that are contemptuous of the United States. Researchers compared parking tickets given to diplomats with a survey conducted by Pew Research into global attitudes toward the U.S. They found that envoys from countries such as Kuwait, Egypt and Sudan, where people had strong antipathy toward America, ran up the most parking infractions. Among the lowest parking scofflaws were Japan and Canada, with zero infractions. M

This raisin made it

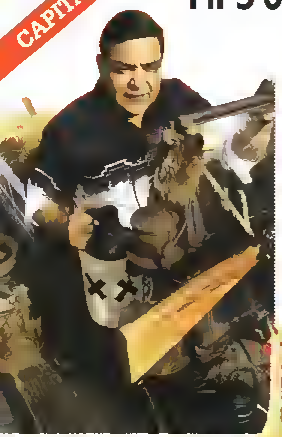
- Sun-Maid
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MPS ON PARADE, PACKING WATER GUNS, BUBBLES

OTTAWA OUTTAKES BY MITCHEL RAPHAEL



OBHRAI'S Stampede car

GET YOUR MP MOONSHINE HERE

Of the four cars designated for Calgary Tory MPs in this year's Stampede parade, **Deepak Obhrai's** was by far the coolest (Jason Kenney's was inexplicably empty). Obhrai's rockin' hillbilly vehicle, decorated with rubber chickens and guns, was stocked with ceramic "moonshine" jugs filled with hooch. One of the farmers in Obhrai's vehicle offered parade revellers a swig, the smell caused them to recoil. None of the MPs made a fashion statement on par with Prime Minister **Stephen Harper's** leather vest of last summer. **Art Hanger** wore a white synthetic cowboy hat, having learned from experience that felt gets bent out of shape in the rain. No politician wants to be seen as "floppy." **Diane Ablonczy** reports that she has two Stampede outfits and alternates between them. Fortunately she chose the blue one this year and matched her 1928 Roadster pickup. She was also free with pancake-flipping advice for other politicians watch out for grill hot spots caused by uneven heat. Otherwise "some poor soul gets a burnt one be cause the organizers hardly ever throw them out." The Prime Minister was not at the parade for security reasons (although his parade sign was standing by in case he changed his mind). He showed up later that day at the president's reception held by Stampede chairman **Steve Allan**. He wore an outback hat given to him by Australian PM **John Howard**. That reception was crashed by **Peter Milliken**, who gave his name to the check-in desk, claiming "someone" had told him to just show up. When asked who he was, Milliken said he was "kinda the Speaker of the House." Was he "kinda" or was he really the Speaker, the desk demanded. He allowed that he was, indeed, the actual Speaker, and he was admitted with no further request of identification or references. The PM's office will no doubt be impressed by the rigorous security detail.



ABLONCZY'S matching truck

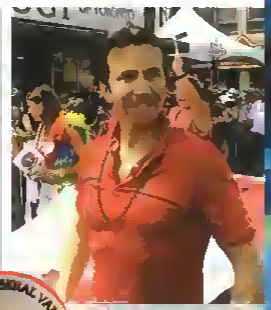


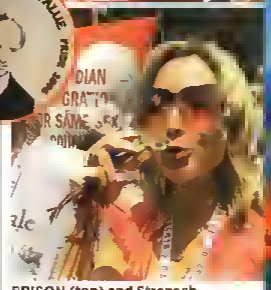


HARPER in the hat the Australian PM gave him

LIBERAL LEADERSHIP WET T-SHIRT CONTEST

At this year's gay Pride celebrations in Toronto, Nova Scotia MP **Scott Brison** wore a red Lacoste polo shirt he bought 23 years ago when **Pierre Trudeau** was PM. It was perhaps fitting, given that Trudeau's picture was on a special made for Pride Liberal pin that said "Equality—A Liberal Value/Pride 2006." Brison sold Liberal memberships at the event in support of his leadership bid. He appeared to be the only Liberal leadership candidate with his own booth. Among his male volunteers, those who had the sleeves cut off their T-shirts sold more party memberships than those who did not. Several of the Liberal leadership contenders marched as a group in the parade, behind a transgender support service whose car emitted huge clouds of exhaust. The Liberals held aloft a giant Canadian flag and dodged red water balloons that were lobbed at them from rooftops. **Michael Ignatieff**, a popular target, got soaked. **Martha Hall Findlay** brought her own water gun. "The only warning I got was, 'Don't wear a white T-shirt at Pride,'" said Hall Findlay. Since her campaign shirts are white, she wore a black T underneath. Was she afraid the Liberal leadership race would degenerate into a wet T-shirt contest? "Frankly, the other leadership contenders would be at a disadvantage." Scott Brison, however, claimed his pecs could easily compete. **Belinda Stronach** marched with the gay rights lobby Egale Canada and blew bubbles with **Rick Mercer**, also with the group. It was a smart move. Sections of the crowd, unhappy with the way some Liberal members have voted on gay issues, had yelled, "Remember our rights" as the other Grits rolled by, but Egale always gets applause. So, too, does the NDP B.C. MP **Bill Siksay** recently put forward a bill to amend the Canadian Human Rights Act to include transsexuals and transgendered individuals. There were no transsexuals in cars emitting fumes in front of the NDP.





BRISON (top) and Stronach, both at gay Pride in Toronto

Mitchel Raphael can be contacted at mitchelraphael@attglobal.net



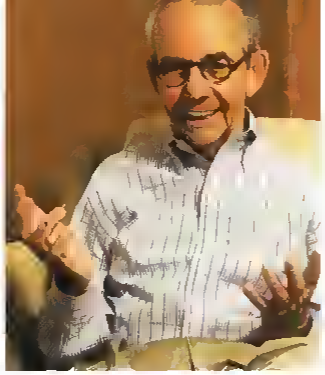
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'The tendency is to deepen friendship and I think one has to be wary. It's more charming often not to deepen it.'

JOSEPH EPSTEIN TALKS TO ANNE KINGSTON ABOUT 'BOX-SEAT' FRIENDS, 'GRANDSTAND' FRIENDS, AND THOSE BETTER LEFT IN THE BLEACHERS

Joseph Epstein is a journalist, academic and author whose work appears in *The New Yorker*, *The Atlantic* and *Commentary*. His last book was *Snobbery: The American Version*. He has just published *Friendship: An Exposé*.

Q: *Samuel Johnson said "life has no pleasure higher or nobler than friendship." Yet there have been few in-depth studies. Why?*

A: Well, there is no theory of friendship, and somehow every subject needs a theory. I think the reason there isn't a theory of friendship is that it has this large, untidy essence. There are so many degrees and calibrations. The one theory we have of friendship is, to me, a fairly debased one, and that's Sigmund Freud's—that friendship is essentially a guise for jumping on each other's bones. Still, I'm amazed that no one has taken it up except in a kind of how-to manner—how to get more friends, how to survive broken friendships—which are written at a pretty low level, if I may say.

Q: *You cut through the complexity by creating a taxonomy of friendships, even drawing a stadium seating plan with your closest friends in the box seats and the less close.*

A: In the grandstand and the bleachers.

Q: *Yes, poor souls. You say friendship by nature is variegated. And your first rule of the art of friendship is that not all friendships should be deepened. Yet received wisdom is that friendship must become more intense.*

A: Yes. The tendency is to deepen it, and I think one has to be wary of it. You and I start talking and I say, "Anne Kingston is simpatico, we got on so well. You know, I'm coming to Toronto next month. Can we have lunch?" And then we have lunch and I say, "You know, my family is going to Antarctica. Is there any chance yours can come with?"

Q: *And the hell begins.*

A: [Laughs] Exactly. But it's not necessary. It's more charming, often, not to deepen it. Something I didn't say in my book—I wish I had yet another draft—is that friendship is one of the few realms in which the golden rule doesn't apply.

Q: *Because not all people want to be treated as you'd treat yourself?*

A: Exactly. Not so long ago somebody called on me in a great huff and said, "You know, you're not reciprocating my good feeling toward you. I always have to take the lead, and I don't think it's right." And I felt like saying, "One more meeting like this and we won't call each other ever!"

Q: *It wouldn't be the first relationship you've severed. What have you learned doing that?*

A: The first thing I learned is what a social coward I am. It's best if you can let friendships lapse, but often the other party won't do that. I think I've been fortunate in never being the party that someone else wanted to drop off—so far as I know.

Q: *You say shared opinions are the least important thing one should seek in a friend. Rather, point of view or one's sensibility is what counts.*

A: Yes, I realized that living in the South in the the '60s. All my friends were integrationists and I would say to myself, "These people have the right opinion, but a lot of them are extraordinarily boring and dreary." That said, each of us will have that point where we can't go. If you say to me, "I'm for the PLO no matter what…" [Laughs]

Q: *Recent studies say the number of friends people have is in decline. You address some of the reasons for this, including the notion that people always have to be "growing," which makes friends disposable.*

A: Yes, charming plants that we are. I don't think I've grown in about 38 years, actually.

Q: *But you do write that friendships shift with age.*

A: I do. Adolescence is the Garden of Eden of friendship. You have all this time for it. Then work intrudes, and then, if one marries, marriage. And then children, especially now in this child-centred culture. And then, growing older, a lot of people become almost wilfully out of it and crankish. And people whom one once loved somehow don't seem so lovable. So there are a lot of casualties. And then some people have been kicked in the pants by fortune, life has been hard.

Q: *But, as you write, it's easier to see a friend through trouble than through luck.*

A: Yes. I find also that male friendship—unlike female friendship—is based on a kind of "manly reticence." I have a good friend who has lapsed into depression and has become kind of seedy and I can't speak to him about it. I just can't say, "You have to pull up your socks, kid, you should be shaving every day."

Q: *Because male friendships provide a way to escape responsible roles?*

A: Yeah, that's my sense. In fact, I read somewhere—and it sounds true—that men confide in women more than they do in other men. I think men have to prove their worthiness to other men, and I think women aren't under quite the same obligation. I quote E.M. Forster: "Pity is at the bottom of women." They really want to be sympathetic. And I think with men, which is what makes us ridiculous, is that we insist on our dignity.

Q: *You believe friendships between men and women are important but are adamant that friendship and sex should never mix.*

A: Yes, I feel they don't.

Q: *Yet you describe friendship between a happily married husband and wife as an ideal. Isn't that a contradiction?*

A: Well, in the fullness of time, sex—though it remains a superior indoor sport—isn't as primary in a marriage, and other things come together that are more important, such as friendship, the raising of children, responsibilities later on for grandchildren. Whereas in a romance—certainly at the outset—sex is everything. There's a kind of possessiveness that's very different. If a friend wanted to possess you the way a lover does, I think you would back away.

Q: *Yes, it would seem pathological. But the expectation that husband and wife are best friends marks a huge shift in friendship.*

A: Yes. I mentioned that Montaigne considered his wife as chattel, somebody to relieve himself with sexually and to raise children. It was not a felicitous marriage.

Q: *You note that the increased status of women in the 20th century has changed the nature of friendship profoundly.*

A: Oh, it's the central thing socially. And I think it's a good thing, not to sound like I'm sucking up to the movement or anything. My wife has been the one person I can tell about disappointments and failures, and those things that I can't tell her I cheerfully repress.

Q: *Another major change you discuss is technology. You write that talk is essential to maintaining friendships, yet you've formed a few exclusively email friendships.*

A: Yeah, I'm an emailista. A phrase I didn't use in the book is that friendship is becoming more and more on demand, the way that entertainment and news are on demand. There's also caller ID. I've had calls from people I adore but I say, "God, it's my friend Norman. He's wonderful but I know it's 35 minutes if I take this call." And I said, "I'm going to screen it. I can't give 35 minutes now." So that part of a friendship is on demand. There are people who rue email because it's ruining prose style, but prose style has other enemies besides email. I have a friendship with a screenwriter, Frederick Raphael, and all we've ever done is email.

Q: *Is that a box-seat friendship?*

A: No, higher grandstand. But there are extraordinary people hidden away in secret places, and email is a wonderful way to get connected.

Q: *You write that friendships can get more complicated with age, but you're making friends into your 60s. Are the pleasures different?*

A: I think they are better in some ways because they're not weighted by the past. I have a number of friendships that go back to grammar school, and with some of them I've said to myself, "You know, if I met this person now I wouldn't do anything to deepen his friendship at all." I think those friendships one makes in one's 40s, 50s and 60s are subtler and sounder in some ways.

Q: *So you should never say "My friendship quota is filled."*

A: I think if you do, you are closing down shop. Older friends understand there has to be a certain distance, that it's not the old adolescent friendship, the "Let's sleep over."

Q: *You're candid—brutally so, about your friendships in the book—to the point of admitting that you lied to one friend to avoid seeing him. Did you give people a heads-up?*

A: No.

Q: *Any response yet?*

A: No. The book hasn't been out in the world long enough. This is not a courageous book; it's a reckless book.

Q: *You describe yourself as a highly sociable misanthrope but I don't sense that.*

A: I don't think I'm a misanthrope, quite. My problem is I seem to be too militantly genial. Have you picked out your clothes for the Antarctic yet, by the way?

Q: [Laughs] *I was amazed that you count some 75 people as friends. Is that because you're not a whiner?*

A: Well you'd think so, except that there are people who like a kind of quid pro quo of whining—I tell you that I'm deeply disappointed with my marriage, and you tell me that your sex life is a disaster, and we both go off skipping away. There are people who believe that telling their troubles makes them better and people who believe that it doesn't. I seem to be one of those who don't believe it helps very much.

Q: *You quote Aristotle, saying "The earnest practice of friendship, in short, requires us to be rather better than most of the time we are." Do you believe that?*

A: Well, for Aristotle the highest form of friendship is two virtuous people each leading the other onto a higher path of virtue. I say the problem is that I don't know so many virtuous people and I'm pretty sure I'm not one myself. But I think if one is with a person of superior character, one tends to want to turn one's own game up a notch or two.

Q: *You write of the strategic importance of having younger friends, especially as older friends die off. But that too requires adaptation as you cease to be the mentor.*

A: Exactly. Though if I live long enough maybe they'll write recommendations for me to get me into the nursing home.

Q: *But you don't believe in friendship based in utility?*



'Adolescence is the Garden of Eden of friendship. Then work intrudes, then marriage, children.'

A: No. Aristotle talks about that as a kind of secondary or tertiary notion, that once the utility's gone there goes the friendship. Although in some cases, one can build on that. I've had editors at various magazines who have become friends, or at least publicists. Maybe it's my friendship promiscuity, but one's heart goes out to people and one shouldn't ever smother that. On the other hand, if your heart goes out too often there you are in the back seat of a Chevy again.

Q: *[Laughs] Thank you. I've enjoyed this. And if you're ever in Toronto, please don't call.*

A: [Laughs] Back atcha.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE SIMON



CANADIAN TROOPS search the countryside west of Kandahar, Cpl. Anthony Boneca (below)

NEW TARGETS

Rebuilding efforts have lagged the military push, with dire results

BY JOHN GEDDES • Perhaps the only real surprise about the death of Cpl. Anthony Boneca this week—he was the 13th Canadian soldier to be killed since Canada's forces moved south in February to Kandahar—was in the description of the place where he fell. The 21-year-old reservist from Thunder Bay, Ont., was shot in the middle of a thriving vineyard, called "lush" in one account, "beautiful" in another. Green places don't figure often in stories from Afghanistan, where any foliage found in the images of a bleak landscape is usually mere background for the red of opium poppies.

So, bitterly ironic though it may be, the spot where Boneca was shot represents the hope of international aid groups as they struggle to back up the punishing military campaign with help for Afghanistan's desperately poor people. In fact, restoring the vineyards and orchards that Kandahar was once famous for is a new key goal for the Canadian International Development Agency, as it retargets the $100 million a year Ottawa has committed to Afghanistan through 2010-11.

Making aid spending pay off in Afghanistan has emerged as a challenge no less daunting—though far less deadly—than the military campaign to suppress the Taliban insurgency. Critics complain that the international development effort started too slowly after the fall of the Taliban government, and still isn't accomplishing enough to win hearts and minds. A source familiar with the Conservative government's Afghanistan strategy said political pressure is being put on CIDA, along with Foreign Affairs, to step up work that would show how the high-risk job Canadian troops are doing in Kandahar can pave the way to better lives for ordinary Afghans.



A CIDA official said the agency's Afghanistan program is being streamlined, partly to make stabilizing Kandahar a top priority. One key component of the strategy: an $15.5-million Canadian-funded pilot project to give farmers alternatives to growing poppies for the illicit drug trade. "Kandahar's orchards were largely destroyed during the Soviet period," said the official, referring to the way Russian forces denuded the countryside to deny cover to the mujahedeen fighters, who ultimately defeated the former superpower in the gruelling 1979-89 war. "Now we're in a rebuilding phase."

Whether troops can make the region safe enough to allow sustained development work remains a big question. "There's a lot of surprise that it took so long to get down there—an opportunity was lost," says Canadian Institute of Strategic Studies president David Rudd, who recently returned from the country. "There has been a political and economic development vacuum in the south."

Linking development workers with troops in so-called provincial reconstruction teams is supposed to let aid work start before fighting stops. But the PRTs have earned at best mixed reviews. "We've had marginal success with the PRTs on the development side," said Marvin Weinbaum, scholar-in-residence at the Middle East Institute in Washington, and a former U.S. State Department Afghanistan analyst. He described PRTs as too often turning into "Fort Apaches," where aid specialists end up hunkering down with soldiers and foreign service officials in guarded compounds out of fear of being targeted by the Taliban, and rarely interact with Afghans.

The CIDA official denied Canada's PRT in Kandahar has been ineffective. But he noted that it is now being beefed up. The lone CIDA worker attached to the PRT is slated to be joined by two more over the summer. As well, CIDA recently sent a special adviser to work with Gen. David Fraser, the Canadian who commands all coalition forces in southern Afghanistan, with the aim of better coordinating development work and military action. Meanwhile, along with its sharpened focus on Kandahar, CIDA continues to pump millions into the Kabul government's efforts to build a sense of national cohesion, including the widely praised National Solidarity Program, which funds simple village projects chosen and run by local leaders.

'THERE'S A LOT OF SURPRISE IT TOOK SO LONG TO GET THERE — AN OPPORTUNITY WAS LOST'

For CIDA, Afghanistan is a huge test at a critical moment. The agency was recently slammed in a C.D. Howe Institute report as overly centralized and inefficient in delivering aid compared to similar agencies in other countries. The Tories' view of CIDA is still forming. Chalking up some successes in the toughest corner of one of the world's most wretched failed states could go a long way to shoring up its reputation—and do some good for the Afghans, too. M

MCPL. ROBERT BOTTRILL/COMBAT CAMERA (TOP); CFC DENGRAH BA C (BOTTOM)

Good morning Mrs. Hashmi

A Muslim scholar is here illegally—teaching an extreme brand of Islam

NICHOLAS KÖHLER • A controversial Pakistani scholar living in Canada who, critics charge, teaches her female students a fundamentalist brand of Islam promoting polygamy and subservience to men, remains here illegally some nine months after immigration officials demanded she leave the country, federal court documents obtained by *Maclean's* reveal.

Farhat Hashmi arrived in October 2004 on a visitor's visa, and has twice been denied the work permit she sought to teach her interpretation of the Koran in Canada. But she has nevertheless established a school where she lectures to mostly young, middle-class women from mainstream Muslim families, not only from across the country but also from the U.S. and as far away as Australia. Moderate Muslims believe her lessons encourage extremist views among her students in Mississauga—the same Toronto suburb where many of the 17 men arrested last month on terrorism-related charges grew up and allegedly developed into radicals. Some of those young men's militant views are reputed to have been influenced by their ideologically inclined wives.

A charismatic figure who cloaks her face and body in orthodox garb, Hashmi amassed considerable wealth in the 1990s by establishing a chain of religious schools across Pakistan. Focusing her instruction on young Westernized women from monied families who had hitherto preferred a pair of jeans to the hijab, Hashmi became famous converting them to a stricter form of Islam. Stories abound of young Muslim party girls changing their ways after just a few lectures, donning the black veils that Hashmi is said to make available for purchase at her schools, along with her lectures in print, audio and DVD formats. "Her network of schools in Pakistan caters exclusively to the upper class," says Tarek Fatah, of the Muslim Canadian Congress. "And that is where she is turning women into mothers who are then converting their sons into extremists."

Perhaps more worrying, Hashmi, who claims to have come to Canada to teach at the request of local Muslims, has been the subject of observation by Pakistani intelligence, a highly placed federal government source told *Maclean's*. Although it is not clear what would drive Pakistani authorities to monitor the woman, who holds a doctorate in Islamic studies from the University of Glasgow, that investigation and subsequent complaints in this country may have led authorities to deny her permission to work as a teacher in Canada, the source adds.



"We regret to inform you that we are unable to approve your request," wrote an immigration official in a letter dated Sept. 30, 2005, and addressed to Hashmi and her family. "You are required to leave Canada immediately. Failure to depart Canada may result in enforcement action being initiated against you." Days after that stern letter, which has yet to be followed up by a removal order that would permit the federal government to force her from Canada, Lorne Waldman, a high-profile Toronto immigration lawyer who also represents Maher Arar, filed an application for leave and for judicial review on Hashmi's behalf. That application, should it succeed, would lead to a review of the case. (Waldman did not return calls seeking comment for this story.) Yet the legal gambit does not supersede the official's request that Hashmi and her family leave Canada, where she continues to live and to teach.

Hashmi is no stranger to controversy. Last year, an undercover documentary filmmaker and freelance journalist, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, infiltrated the al-Huda Islamic Centre of Canada, Hashmi's Mississauga-based school, and heard her describe the Kashmiri earthquake as God's punishment for "immoral activities." According to Hashmi, "The people in the area where the earthquake hit were involved in immoral activities, and God has said that he will punish those who do not follow his path." She has also been quoted arguing that Muslim women should permit



LESSONS at the al-Huda Islamic Centre, say critics, encourage extremism

their husbands to marry more than once so that "other sisters can also benefit."

Such views frighten more progressive Muslims, concerned that her teachings could further marginalize their communities. "You ought to be worried about her in Canada, because there are young women who are growing up here who are being sent by their parents to her and who are coming out really conservative in their outlook of Islam," says Obaid-Chinoy. Farzana Hassan Shahid, a researcher and freelance journalist who has attended several of Hashmi's lectures—including one last month at al-Huda—describes as many as 200 women sitting on the classroom floor, turning the pages of their textbooks in unison so as not to irritate Hashmi. "These women are sitting just absolutely rapt," she says, noting the students call Hashmi "madam" and carry her purse behind her. "She's not loud and vociferous—in her gentle, meek way she's very assertive."

Hashmi arrived in 2004 with her husband, Idrees Zubair, also an Islamic scholar educated at the University of Glasgow, and two of their children. In interviews with immigration officials, court documents show, Hashmi said "her focus is to liberate and educate the Islamic women." Indeed, she calls herself an "Islamic feminist" whose teachings provide women a voice in their families. Still, she instructs them to "listen to your husband—he's your leader," says Hassan Shahid.

At the time, Hashmi and her family prompted no concern from Canadian authorities. Her first work permit in Canada was denied because of an error in the application. Her second—which like the first was based on an invitation for employment by the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)—was denied because at $43,500, the proposed salary exceeded the amount allowed to religious teachers, who are expected to work on a volunteer basis and are permitted only a small stipend. In a reply filed at federal court in March, Waldman argues that the $43,500 is just enough to cover the family's living expenses "and, therefore, met the definition of stipend."

Mubeen Qureshi, who works with Hashmi and was a key figure in bringing her to Canada, refused comment on this story and said Hashmi does not speak with media. She added: "Do you want to speak to my lawyer?" Asked for her lawyer's name, Qureshi hung up the telephone. Calls to Hashmi's home met with similar protestations. "Being a lady, she can't speak with gents," said a man at her number who refused to identify himself. When asked about Hashmi's status in Canada, he too hung up the telephone. But Mohammad Ashraf, secretary general of ISNA Canada and the man who signed Hashmi's letter of employment, defended her. "We need people like her—men and women who really teach what the Koran says," he told *Maclean's*. "These people who are criticizing her, they are just going around the bush because they don't practise Islam themselves."

Among those who have expressed concern about Hashmi is Wajid Khan, MP for Mississauga Streetsville. Khan made news last month when he revealed he'd confronted Qayyum Abdul Jamal, 43, one of the 17 Toronto-area men arrested in June on terrorism-related charges, after he told a congregation of Muslims that Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan were raping women. But last August, Khan's office also made inquiries into Hashmi's work permit application, which Khan told *Maclean's* he could not support. "If she's been asked to leave the country, she should leave the country," he says. The federal government, he adds, should move to have her returned to Pakistan. "I don't understand why they haven't taken action so far." M

Don't paddle drunk

Canoeing under the influence now costs you your licence in Ontario

COLIN CAMPBELL • Looking down the lake from his Muskoka cottage, north of Toronto, David Zimmer can just make out the spot where the first arrest was made under Ontario's tough new drinking and boating law, which gives police the power to suspend, on the spot, a drunk boater's driver's licence. While Zimmer, the MPP who drafted the law, chuckles at the incident—the woman driving was naked and trying to outrun the police in her motorboat—he's serious about stopping just this kind of reckless activity. Drunk boating kills dozens of Canadians each year.

One thing Zimmer did not envision when he wrote the law was this: someone losing their licence for canoeing while drunk. Or, say, for paddle boating, or floating down a river in an inflatable kayak, drunk. These might seem like harmless summer activites (canoe crashes tend to be relatively low speed, low impact events, after all), but in the cold, unflinching eyes of the law, they are offences under the Criminal Code, and therefore fall under Ontario's new legislation. Drink and canoe in Ontario this summer and be prepared to lose your driver's licence for a year.



FRIENDS don't let friends drink and paddle

This new law of the lake has caught many by surprise. MADD Canada, the national anti-drunk driving lobby that backed Zimmer's legislation, didn't realize it applied to non-powered boats, but nevertheless supports the effort. "It may well be as a matter of policy some people believe the act is too broadly framed. But I think that's a detail and misses the central thrust of the legislation," says Robert Solomon, the national director of legal policy at MADD. Zimmer's law, one of the rare private member's bills to pass, went through with unanimous support on the legislature's last day in session in June. His early draft clearly noted the law would only refer to motorboats (many assume that's what the law still says), but that clause was pulled by government lawyers, he says. Since Ontario's law merely extends existing drinking and driving penalties to an existing federal offence (impaired boating), lawmakers deferred to a vague federal law for the definition of a boat.

Ontario now has the strictest law of its kind in North America. Boat drivers whose blood alcohol level exceeds the legal limit will have their car driver's licence suspended for 90 days, and if convicted lose it for an entire year. Those who test below the legal limit, but fall in a so-called "warn" range, will have their licence pulled for 12 hours. The police have long used the definition of a vessel found in the Canada Shipping Act to charge impaired boaters under the Criminal Code. That definition does not differentiate between canoes, paddleboats, or powerboats. "Basically, it's anything intended and used for navigation," says Staff Sgt. Brad Schlorff, the manager of the Ontario Provincial Police Specialized Patrols unit. "It's not your inflatable air mattress, but if you go out in a little rubber boat with a couple of paddles, it's a vessel." Drunk canoeing is not a common offence, but police do pay attention to canoes, says Schlorff. "You're in a huge risk when you're drunk in a canoe. The reality is, statistically across North America, about 35 per cent of all boating fatalities occur in non-powered vessels, primarily canoes and kayaks."

It was Pierre Berton who was famously quoted as saying a Canadian is somebody who can make love in a canoe. Now a caveat from Ontario: just don't do it drunk. M

FOR THE RECORD

A DOOMED RESERVIST'S SECOND THOUGHTS

"He said, 'Uncle Bill, it's not like it was on TV,' and 'I would never do this again.' I don't think he believed totally in what he was doing because I think he saw things he didn't expect to see and didn't want to see, and probably did things he didn't want to do."
—William Babe, the uncle of disillusioned 21-year-old Cpl. Anthony Boneca, a Canadian reservist from Thunder Bay, Ont., who died in combat on Sunday in Afghanistan.

KEVIN LAMB

TO HELL WITH MUSLIMS

White supremacists are courting an unlikely ally: the Islamic community

BY NANCY MACDONALD • Ontario MPP Kathleen Wynne's invitation to speak at the conference "Christians-Muslims Relationships in the 21st Century: A Global Perspective" came from a constituent she knew well. The event, hosted by the Islamic Supreme Council of Canada, sounded promising. "I'm very interested in interfaith dialogue, between Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Jews, all of us," says Wynne. She agreed to participate. Official invitations were sent out, with Wynne's name as well as that of keynote speaker William Baker. Then Wynne got a call tipping her off about Baker. He had written the anti-Israel book *Theft of a Nation*, and once chaired the U.S. Populist Party, which nominated former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke as its candidate in the 1988 presidential race. An occasional lecturer at the Crystal Cathedral—the California mega-church from which televangelist Robert Schuller broadcasts the *Hour of Power*—Baker resigned in 2002 after his neo-Nazi ties were publicized.

Wynne acted quickly. She refused to share the stage with Baker. He was dropped from the conference, to be held on July 16. Another Toronto event at which Baker was to speak this month—the 18th Annual Islamic Dawah Conference—appeared to follow suit.

But why was a man with suspected neo-Nazi ties booked to speak at two Muslim conferences in the first place? The events were par for the course for Baker, who founded the group Christians And Muslims for Peace (CAMP), and has been touring American campuses, meeting with Muslim student groups. According to CAMP's website, topics include "the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, Kashmir, and U.S. Foreign Policy and Islam."

Baker isn't the lone example of the radical right attempting community outreach among Muslims. In fact, experts point to a developing alliance between Muslim extremists and neo-Nazis, and the far right isn't denying it. "U.S. Nazis don't consider Islamic people the enemy," says August Kreis, head of Aryan Nations, a neo-Nazi group based in Lexington, S.C. "We want them to join us." It's a bizarre coalition, and underlying the newfound rapport is the adage, "The enemy of my enemy is my friend." Both count as their chief antagonists the Jewish people, the state of Israel, and the U.S. government.

In Toronto, Tarek Fatah, communications director for the Muslim Canadian Congress, was first to sound the alarm about Baker within his community. Fatah had heard Baker speak at a U.S. mosque and was "appalled." "It was the whole notion that there's a conspiracy against Muslims, and Muslims should face up," he says. He counts Baker among the pretenders who "act as though they're friends of the Muslim community, but come from the Christian right and use the community to propagate their own point of view."



AHMADINEJAD: Still denying the Holocaust



BAKER: Making new friends

'U.S. NAZIS DON'T CONSIDER ISLAMIC PEOPLE THE ENEMY,' SAYS ONE. 'WE WANT THEM TO JOIN US.'

But Tanweer Zaman, secretary and treasurer of the Forum for Social Studies—the host of the Islamic Dawah conference—says Baker, who recently visited Sudan, simply wanted to share his experiences. Zaman says the speech was titled "Can Christians and Muslims live together?"

In his defence, Baker, now 66, has said he quit the Populist Party due to the infiltration of racists. He says he had no knowledge of the 1984 platform, which included a call to repeal the section of the Civil Rights Act that prohibits segregation in public places. But the party was started by Willis Carto, the dean of U.S. anti-Semitism and founder of the Holocaust-denying Institute for Historical Review. And the platform was introduced at a convention Baker chaired.

In any case, George Michael, a professor with the University of Virginia's College at Wise who studies the convergence of militant Islam and the extreme right, sees greater cause for alarm elsewhere. Revisionist history has found an outlet in parts of the Middle East—as have Klan proselytizers like Duke, who in 2002 presented a lecture in Bahrain on "Israeli Involvement in September 11." President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran has called the Holocaust "a myth." So has Muhammad Mehdi Akef, leader of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. In March, Syrian President Bashar Assad told PBS, "If you ask many people in the region, they would say the West exaggerated the Holocaust."

Still, rhetoric aside, there's little to indicate any real operational alliances, says Mark Potok, intelligence director for the Southern Poverty Law Center in Alabama, a watchdog that monitors organized hate. "When all is said and done, for American neo-Nazis, Muslims are, quote, 'mud people.' It's hard to get beyond that. 'At the end of the day, the enemy of my enemy is still my enemy.' "Last night," says Kreis, "I spent two hours talking to a Palestinian, out of Canada, and yes, I'd invite him into my home." He pauses, then adds: "As long as he doesn't try to marry my daughter." M

AP (TOP)



EVERYONE'S MAD ABOUT VLAD

The tough talk dies down as the other G8 leaders rally around Putin

BY LUIZA CH. SAVAGE • When Vladimir Putin made his virgin appearance at the Group of Eight summit in July 2000, the leaders assembled on the Japanese island of Okinawa were smitten. The former spymaster was younger and better looking than his populist predecessor Boris Yeltsin—and sober. He talked a good game about democracy, and impressed the others by admitting that his country had problems, lots of them, and vowing to fix them. He gamely fielded extensive questions from the international press—and acted as if he enjoyed it. "We were all very impressed by the performance of Mr. Putin," gushed Jean Chrétien at the summit.

France's Jacques Chirac praised Putin's commitment to a "peaceful and democratic Russia." Germany's Gerhard Schröder proposed that Russia be made a full G8 member. At the 2002 summit in Kananaskis, Alta., Russia was formally added to the summit rotation. According to the official communique, this "reflects the remarkable economic and democratic transformation that has occurred in Russia in recent years and in particular under the leadership of President Putin."

This weekend, Putin will host his first G8 summit in St. Petersburg—and the tone could hardly be more different. There have been calls, particularly in the U.S. and Britain, for a boycott of the summit, or expelling Russia from the clubhouse. A group of American lawmakers, including Republican Senator John McCain and Democrat Joe Lieberman, wrote to the G8 leaders, calling on them to "rebuke" Putin for actions "inconsistent with G8 democratic norms," and to meet separately without him. "President Putin has steered Russia away from democracy and toward authoritarianism," they said. "He has increased pressure on opposition political parties and civil society, strengthened state control over national broadcast media, and pursued politically driven prosecutions of independent business leaders, academics and others voicing criticism of the government."

Others have also lashed out at Putin, including international human rights groups, and U.S. Vice-President Dick Cheney, after Russia cut off gas supplies to Ukraine earlier this year. Putin blamed a price dispute, but critics saw the move as yet another instance of Russia punishing a former Soviet satellite state moving closer to Europe and NATO. In May, Cheney told an audience in Vilnius, Lithuania, that Russian "opponents of reform are seeking to reverse the gains of the last decade." Cheney accused Russia of using oil and gas shipments as "tools of intimidation and blackmail" and of "interfering with democratic movements." Says Celeste Wallander, director of the Russia and Eurasia Program at the Center for Strategic & International Studies, a Washington think tank: "It's an enormous irony that you have the country that holds the presidency of the G8 taking itself down a path contrary to what the G8 is supposed to be about—market-oriented, liberal democracies."

Such criticism has plunged the Russians into damage-control mode for what was supposed to be their own international coming out ball. "The high hopes I had heard in Russia a year ago, that with hosting the summit Russia was emerging as a modern great power—those hopes are gone," says Wallander. "The government is now trying to avoid a disastrous summit—one that would be embarrassing to Putin and Russia."

Yet so far, the indications are that Moscow is succeeding. President George W. Bush is not boycotting, and has indicated that while he plans to raise thorny issues, he will do so respectfully, without causing Putin to lose face. "Nobody either wants to be lectured by somebody. Nobody either likes to be scolded publicly," Bush has said. Likewise, Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently told reporters that while he expected questions about Russian democracy to be raised at the summit, "at the same time we do want to recognize some of the progress that Russia has made, and we all know that President Putin took over a country that had a remarkable range of problems, not just in the area of democratic governance." Others sounding a conciliatory note have been U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Canadian Foreign Minister Peter MacKay.

In fact, Cheney's tough talk is shaping up to be the harshest words that Putin may have to face from his guests. The reality is that his fellow G8 leaders can't help but recognize that Putin could be quite useful to them as they grapple with North Korea's missile tests and Iran's nuclear ambitions. "Among G8 leaders he is the one with the closest relationship with North Koreans," says John Kirton, director of the G8 Research Group at the University of Toronto, who has spent recent weeks in Moscow on a grant from the Canadian International Development Agency, advising the Russian presidency on hosting a successful summit. "Mr. Putin is by far the G8 leader most well-connected with the Iranian elite, someone who can go behind the headlines and figure out what is going on there."

For their part, the Russians have been doing their best to convince the other G8 members that embarrassing them would not be in the West's best interest. In the pre-summit meetings among ministers and government officials, they have been uncharacteristically cooperative on international efforts concerning Iran. They have also flaunted their clout as an energy producer, at a summit whose theme is "energy security." Officially, Putin wants to help oil-importing countries by developing an international strategy for avoiding energy crises. But according to Wallander, Russia has also signalled that contracts to develop its gas fields will go to those companies whose home countries enjoy good political relations with Moscow.

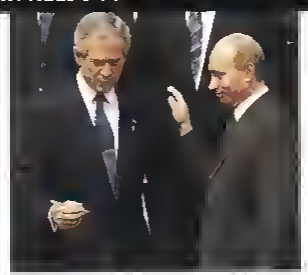
Putin has also tried to defuse some of the criticism of his domestic policies, such as a recent law that gives the government more power over non-governmental organizations. He defends the law, saying it is aimed at regulating such groups, and at preventing foreign funds from influencing Russian politics. NGOs, though, say the law is vague and enables the government to harass them, so Putin made a point of convening an official NGO summit July 3-4, and publicly promised to make sure the implementation of the new measures would not be restrictive. The steps seem to be working. A senior White House official said the administration is encouraged, although he called the enactment of the law "critical, and something that we are watching very, very closely."

The Russian president is also relying on the same candour and charm offensive that served him well in 2000. He recently took part in an international webcast on BBC News in which he answered a smattering from some 5,000 questions submitted by viewers from around the globe, on subjects ranging from military policy in Chechnya to when he first had sex. ("I can't remember the first time," he answered. "But I remember exactly when I last did it.")

Meanwhile, Bush, who once claimed to have looked into the Russian's "soul," is making nice. "I do like him," Bush recently told interviewer Larry King. "I don't necessarily agree with every decision he's made about what's happening inside Russia, but it's very important for me to keep a good personal relationship with him so I can have good, candid discussions." Putin reciprocated saying of Bush: "I consider him one of the people I consider to be my friends." Friends in need are friends indeed. M



AS HOST, PUTIN NEEDS TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL GUMMIT. BUSH SEEMS ONLY TOO HAPPY TO OBLIGE.



THERE were calls for a boycott, but the former KGB men turned on the charm

(TOP) ANDREA COMAS/REUTERS. YURI KADOBNOV/AFP/GETTY IMAGES. MAXIM MARMUR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ON THE WEB *See Luiza Ch. Savage's new blog, at* www.macleans.ca/luizasavage

KEEPING BRITAIN FOR THE BRITONS

The British National Party wants minorities to leave the U.K.

BY MICHAEL PETROU • The British National Party believes that the government of the United Kingdom is engaged in a "cultural war" against the British people, driven by a need to create a "new ethnic power base" to keep itself in office. For evidence, members point to the flood of immigrants and ethnic minorities who they say are coddled and who threaten to make white Britons a minority in their own country. "We do not accept the absurd superstition," the party platform says, "of human equality." This does not mean one race is superior to another, it hastens to add, only that some are more genetically predisposed to creating modern democracies based on private property and individual freedom, and other races are better at, say, running quickly. The BNP says it would devote billions toward convincing ethnic minorities to leave Britain. Membership is restricted to white Europeans.

The BNP has existed on the fringes for more than two decades, rarely able to muster much support. But this has changed. In local elections this year, the party made gains, winning 11 of 51 seats in the East London borough of Barking and Dagenham, a number that could rise to 12 pending legal procedures. Barking is an ethnically mixed working class neighbourhood, where South Asian restaurants are scattered among traditional pubs full of men wearing England soccer jerseys. "I'm a BNP activist," a man named Bill Rankin says, pointing at his shaven head and issuing an invitation to join him and four white friends for a drink. "You can tell by my haircut." Rankin, who runs a plumbing and heating company, adds, "I'm not fighting for racist issues. I'm fighting for looking after myself first." Everything is given to immigrants and minorities first, he says. "We're second-class citizens in our own country."

Sean Flagherty, a friend of Rankin's, is Irish, but says that since he moved to England he has become a patriotic Englishman. He points to a group of South Asians walking





GRIFFIN (standing, below) is articulate and polite, but some of his supporters are not

past the pub. Several of the women are wearing burkas. "How many of these foreigners would wear an England shirt?" he asks. 'They come here showing just a little slit, so you can't see their faces. If you're going to live in this country, learn the language."

BNP supporters are often written off as bigoted yobs, and no doubt some are. But Rankin and the others insist they're not racist. Two have daughters who are marrying black men, and they're happy about it. And when another friend, Sam Singh, brown-skinned and with a turban and a beard, arrives to join them, there are hugs all around. "He's English," one of the men says of Singh. 'He thinks the same as us, and he drinks the same as us."

Singh himself says he's never had any trouble with racists in Barking and isn't concerned that his friends are voting for the BNP. But others in the neighbourhood aren't so relaxed about the BNP's success. Augustin, a 30-year-old black man, says that 15 years ago non-whites in Barking and Dagenham were threatened with violence by white residents. "But now that immigration has reached a certain level, they don't have the backbone to fight back. So the only way they can do this is with the BNP."

The party's current leader, Nick Griffin, is articulate and polite. He insists that the BNP's goals on race and immigration are based on a desire to preserve racial and cultural diversity, rather than being a white supremacist movement. He believes racial integration is a disaster. He would probably not approve of his supporters' daughters in Barking marrying black men. "Young black males have, on average, a higher testosterone level than young white males, just as young white males have a higher testosterone level than young Chinese males," says Griffin, 47. "So young blacks, if they're not in a strictly disciplined and ordered society, are more likely to become criminals than young whites. If you're going to have those people in your society, you need to take that into account."

As for Jews. "Generations of living off their wits have made the Jews slightly cleverer on average than anyone else," he says. "So they tend to dominate, or be disproportionately represented in some professions. I used to think it was a conspiracy. I don't anymore."

The BNP's platform tackles other issues besides race, issues that are neglected by mainstream parties. It proposes tough measures against criminals, as the Conservatives once did but no longer do with much conviction. The BNP has open contempt for the EU. It's opposed to further immigration. Perhaps most importantly, the BNP says it stands behind poor whites—men and women who were once integral to the Labour Party but who now feel ignored. Thousands live in grim housing estates in places like Barking.

Griffin is candid about his party's ability to fill the vacuum. "The Labour Party has abandoned vast areas of old Labour territory," he says. "They've lost touch with the white working class. When you've got all the other parties cuddled up on this piece of centre ground, there's this vast space. And we've been able to appeal to people on either side of this centre block." According to Alveena Malik at the Commission for Racial Equality, which is funded by the government and tasked with promoting better race relations, the BNP has done a good job of focusing on local issues, which gives them the image of a party that cares about neglected neighbourhoods. "But if you look at their underlying policies, they are very racist," she says.

Polls have shown wide support for many BNP policies. But the majority of Britons also reject the idea that non-white citizens are "less British" than whites, and they don't think immigrants should be encouraged to leave. It is clear that the party's obsession with keeping Britain white is repelling many potential voters. So why doesn't the BNP open itself up to everyone, regardless of colour or background? "We're not here to gain power for the sake of it. We're here to gain power to do things we think need doing," Griffin explains. Besides, he adds, parts of London and other cities are on the verge of exploding into riots, as did Paris last fall. "When that comes, our position will be that of Churchill in the 1930s. We're at the warning stage. Sooner or later, we'll be vindicated." M

THE ISSUE IN...

AUSTRALIA: REAL MEN DON'T PLAY WITH PURSES

An Australian TV ad for a rugby match goaded Kiwis last week by showing the New Zealand All Blacks carrying digitally inserted ladies purses. In the spot, the All Blacks perform the Maori *haka* war dance in a stadium while sporting lovely pink or green shoulder bags. The jibe is a reference to a bar fight that the All Blacks former team captain broke up by walloping a teammate with a nearby purse, prompting the teammate to burst into tears.

TERROR CENTRAL

The Mumbai attacks are a reminder: terrorism went global before 9/11

JONATHON GATEHOUSE • Familiar targets, all-too-predictable carnage, the same numbing sense of fear. A well-coordinated series of bomb attacks on Mumbai's commuter rail system Tuesday killed more than 170 people and injured close to 500, bringing a city of 16 million to a standstill. The eight blasts—staggered over a half-hour period during the height of evening rush hour in India's financial capital—were designed to inflict maximum damage, crumpling rail cars, and spraying glass and shrapnel across packed platforms. Television footage showed scores of dazed and bloody survivors waiting by the tracks for aid. As the city's phone system collapsed under the volume of calls between concerned friends and families, and emergency vehicles bogged down in traffic, bystanders performed much of the rescue work, carrying the wounded to waiting ambulances.

For many in the West, the attacks and their chaotic aftermath will bring to mind the horrors of Bali, Madrid, or last summer's deadly London Underground explosions, which all told killed 449 people. But to Indians they reinforce a lesson that has already been bitterly learned—terrorism went "global" long before Sept. 11. Over the last decades, the South Asian superpower has suffered hundreds of militant attacks each year, according to the U.S. State Department's annual Country Reports on Terror, carried out by dozens of religious, linguistic and political factions. In parts of east, south and central India, the Maoist Naxalite movement is estimated to have as many as 20,000 armed followers and is blamed for more than 1,000 killings in the past year alone. In May 2005, Babbar Khalsa, a Sikh terrorist group that many had thought defunct, staged an emphatic comeback by bombing two movie theatres in New Delhi, killing one person and injuring 60. And the long-running dispute over the future of the Indian-controlled Kashmir and Jammu regions along the Pakistani border is estimated to have claimed the lives of more than 45,000 people since 1989.

Blame for this week's Mumbai attacks is already being laid at the feet of the Laskar-e-Tayyiba (Army of the Pure), the most active of the Kashmiri militant Islamist groups. Indian authorities hold the Pakistan-based LeT responsible for dozens of bloody attacks since the mid-1990s, including a series of explosions in Mumbai in August 2003 that left 55 dead and 180 injured, as well as a bombing in New Delhi last October that killed more than 60. The LeT is also believed to have had a major hand in the December 2001 storming of the Indian parliament—which almost succeeded in sparking an Indo-Pakistani war.

In the wake of last week's bombings, Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf issued a statement strongly condemning the "terrorist attack" in Mumbai, but it seems unlikely that will be enough to placate his neighbours. Under U.S. pressure, the Pakistani government banned the LeT in early 2002, but it has re-emerged from the shadows since an earthquake devastated the Kashmir region last fall, openly raising funds for its "relief" efforts in mosques and marketplaces.







RUSH-HOUR DESTRUCTION. The bombs were built to inflict maximum damage

Relations between the two nations are now at serious risk of unravelling, says Stephen Cohen, a foreign policy fellow with Washington's Brookings Institution. "This one event may not be enough on its own, but if something else were to happen in the near future all bets are off." The recent Indo-Pakistani thaw has been mostly cosmetic, Cohen notes. "The peace process has been going nowhere. On the core issues—like the future of Kashmir—India just isn't willing to talk."

Other observers are even more pessimistic. Radhika Desai, an expert on South Asian politics at the University of Manitoba, says the recent genial gloss only serves to camouflage the fundamental shift that has been going on in the region. The U.S. is growing closer—economically, militarily, strategically—to India, and showing less and less patience for its traditional ally Pakistan. "In speeches by Bush and Condoleezza Rice, India is always a shining example," says Desai. "Pakistan is only ever a problem." Kashmir is the friction point, but the real battle is the one for influence and power in Southeast Asia. National ambition, just like terrorism, is a truly global phenomenon. M

jonathon.gatehouse@macleans.rogers.com

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: AP PHOTO; PUNIT PARANJPE/REUTERS; AFP (TOP) DARREN STAPLES/REUTERS; GARETH FULLER/EMPICS

THE BILLIONAIRE PRINCE
WHO OWNS CANADA'S TREASURES

For the man who runs most of our great hotels, it's the next deal that matters

BY STEVE MAICH

There's no preparing for the world Bill Fatt walked into when he touched down in Riyadh seven years ago, and came face to face with the prince for the first time. He was there to do his duty as CEO of Canada's Fairmont Hotels and Resorts, paying an obligatory call on Saudi Arabia's most prominent citizen—the world's fifth richest man, with a personal fortune of US$24 billion—who also happened to be his company's most important new shareholder.

Fatt was braced for the same old questions that big investors always ask of executives: costs? asset sales? strategy? Money men always want to know what the CEO is doing to make them even wealthier. For most executives, such encounters are like trips to the proctologist—uncomfortable, and often a bit degrading. But, as Fatt would soon discover, there's nothing typical about Prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud.

Their first meeting took place over lunch at Alwaleed's 317 room, 400,000 sq. foot palace in the middle of the city. Those who've seen it say the 20-foot waterfall fountain is perhaps its most striking feature, or maybe it's the opulent foyer with the 75 foot ceiling, or the marble, Olympic-sized indoor swimming pool, or the Astroturf soccer field. Hundreds of televisions and millions of dollars in furniture and artwork are kept spotless by a staff of more than 150. The spread cost US$130 million to build in 1999, but that was before the latest oil boom sent another wave of development sloshing through the kingdom.

Over lunch, Fatt quickly warmed to his host's deep understanding of hotels in general and Fairmont in particular. He talked about branding, opportunities for growth around the world, and asked Fatt about his ideas for the future. When he tired of talking shop, the prince decided to show off some of his favourite toys. Out came a handler with about a dozen trained hunting falcons. Fatt listened in amazement as the prince eagerly described his sleek raptors, and finally revealed their equally astonishing price tag: about US$250,000 each, plus upkeep. "Clearly, this is not like having a business lunch at the Toronto Club," Fatt deadpans now.

But if Fatt was impressed then, it wasn't until just a few months ago that he came to fully understand the power of his new ally. In May, Alwaleed pulled Fairmont from the clutches of corporate raiders intent on taking over and tearing apart the venerable hotelier. He completed a US$3.9 billion deal to acquire all outstanding shares of Fairmont and merge it with Colony Capital's Raffles chain. Overnight, Alwaleed vaulted himself from passive investor to heavyweight status in the leisure and travel business, and in the process, he put Bill Fatt in control of a global powerhouse with 120 upscale properties in 23 countries, including London's Savoy hotel and the George V in Paris, not to mention management of several of Canada's most iconic properties: the Banff Springs, Toronto's Royal York and the Château Frontenac to name a few. On top of that, Alwaleed holds a 25 per cent stake in Canada's other luxury hotel brand, Four Seasons.

But all that could be about to change yet again. Just a few months after cementing his position atop the Canadian hotel business, the prince has put much of Fairmont's real estate on the block. Sources say his plan is to turn the business upside down one more time, converting Fairmont into a pure hotel management company, turning the physical assets and land over to other investors in a bid to raise close to US$3 billion to pay off debts.

The whole dizzying dance has financiers around the world looking again for insights into the enigmatic prince. Billionaire, philanthropist, technophile, media baron and even amateur diplomat, he seems a perfect embodiment of his kingdom of contrasts—where devout faith and obscene wealth maintain an uneasy coexistence. Saudi Arabia is, after all, a place where the professional classes cruise the streets in luxury cars and watch North American sitcoms downloaded from the Internet, but where women are still prohibited from getting behind the wheel and serious crimes are punishable by public beheading. Perhaps it's only fitting that the face of the modern kingdom is a faithful Muslim, educated in the U.S., who prays to Allah five times a day, but is equally steeped in the gospel according to Warren Buffett.

He's hardly the stereotypical Saudi sheik, in other words—he's as activist and internationalist as most of his countrymen are conservative and insular. And he won't be satisfied until he has not only conquered the world of business, but changed the perception of what it means to be wealthy and Arab.



THE WORLD'S FIFTH RICHEST man, with a fortune of $24 billion, the prince compares his approach to Warren Buffett's. But there are questions about how he got so rich

LOUAI BESHARA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

NO CREDIT

RAMSEY MANKARIOUS is one of the rare few who have been admitted to the prince's inner circle. His adventure began in 1995. He was 27, and already a successful hotel consultant in London, when he was summoned to Riyadh to meet with the prince.

He flew in the night before his meeting, and at six the next morning, he woke up, put on a suit and tie, ate breakfast and waited for a call. An hour went by. Then two. Then five more. Finally, at around dinnertime, the phone rang. It was Alwaleed's assistant. The prince would meet him at 10 that night.

After 16 hours stewing in his hotel room, Mankarious was escorted into a darkened office where the prince sat behind a black lacquered U shaped desk with television screens inset, tuned to American news stations. The prince started firing questions. Every few minutes, one of his phone lines would ring and he would answer, signalling Mankarious to keep talking, as if he could keep up two conversations at once.

The interrogation went on for two hours. Finally, the prince declared that the young man would come and work for him, managing his hotel investments. It was less an offer than a statement of fact. "I asked what my salary would be and he just waived his hand: 'we'll work that out later.'" Still, he took the job, agreeing to uproot his life and move to Riyadh. "Sometimes you just click with someone and you know immediately," he remembers now. "He gives you a buzz, it's hard to explain. Right away I knew he wasn't the typical Gulf investor. Usually those guys are rich by birth or by oil, and they're not the sharpest tools in the shed. The prince was very Western in his attitude. Aggressive but not at all condescending."

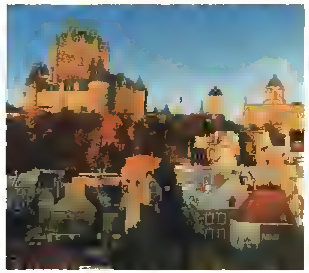
With that, Mankarious took his first step into a new universe, with the prince at its centre. Alwaleed's small team of about 40 advisers and managers lived by the peculiar rhythm of his schedule: work from noon to about 5 p.m., then home for a meal and a rest, and back to the office at 8 p.m. to work until sometime between midnight and 2 a.m. Not only did this accommodate the prince's odd sleep schedule, it allowed the company to communicate directly and easily with all major markets in the world—North America, Europe and Asia.

He soon learned that the prince was obsessed with details, and had little patience for mistakes. When properties were acquired and remodelled, he would get deeply involved, weighing in on such matters as the colour of toilet seats and the wallpaper patterns. When Mankarious would fax a memo or document to head office for a signature, he would frequently get a fax in return a few minutes later, with spelling and grammatical errors circled. "He expects perfection. He's very demanding, but he never yells. He doesn't have to. When he's upset, you just know it. He also never told you 'good job.' He'd just find a way to let you know."

If Alwaleed was a tough boss, however, the constant adrenalin rush of multi million-dollar deals and the lavish lifestyle more than made up for it. On weekends, the prince and his closest associates would retreat to his desert encampment about an hour north of Riyadh. The dozens of mobile homes and air conditioned tents were served by massive satellite dishes so the boss need never be without his ubiquitous televisions, telephones, and computer connections. In the evenings, courtiers built massive log fires so the prince and his guests could feast under the stars while listening to nomadic desert tribesmen read poetry in his honour, and beg for handouts.



AT HIS DESERT CAMP, HIS GUESTS FEAST BEFORE LOG FIRES AS TRIBESMEN READ POETRY IN HIS HONOUR AND 'COURT JESTERS' TELL JOKES



LUXURY HERITAGE. Fairmont owns the Banff Springs (left) and Château Frontenac (above)

When travelling with the prince, it was aboard his flying palace: a customized 767, which has since been upgraded to a plush 747. In the summer, Alwaleed spends a few weeks moored off the coast of Cannes on his 283-foot yacht, complete with a crew of 34 and helicopter pad should the need arise for a quick trip to Paris. He bought it several years ago from Donald Trump, for US$19 million. It's essentially a floating mansion, but he needs the room. Alwaleed generally travels with an entourage that includes a coterie of business associates, a secretary, a man in charge of communications, a photographer to record his every

move, bodyguards, and a couple of guys whose only responsibility is to tell jokes and keep the atmosphere light. 'The court jesters we'd call them,' Mankarious says. "They were usually Bedouin guys, nice guys who could make the prince laugh. They wouldn't be around when we were doing business, but at night when we'd relax they'd be there. That's how he likes to unwind, with people around that he enjoys listening to."

This is the life of a prince, but it wasn't exactly the life Alwaleed was born into.

THE OFFICIAL VERSION of Prince Alwaleed's ascent to billionaire status goes like this: clever young man returns to the kingdom in 1980, with an American education and his family's connections, but not much else. His father gives him US$30,000 and a house in Riyadh to get established. The young prince promptly mortgages the house for $300,000, and uses the money to set himself up as a real estate speculator and consultant to foreign investors who need help navigating the kingdom's closed economy and complex local administration—all for a reasonable commission, of course.

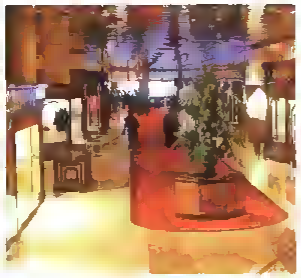
Flash forward to 1990, when the young prince abruptly appears among the heavyweights of international finance. The giant U.S. bank Citicorp had run into tough times, and was in desperate need of a capital infusion when an unknown Saudi royal named Alwaleed stepped forward with a life-saving investment of close to US$800 million. That one purchase has since grown to more than US$10 billion, not including dividends, and stands as the centrepiece of the prince's US$24 billion fortune, as well as the key to his legend.

Others scoff at this official version. For one thing, Alwaleed is a relatively minor royal with a tenuous link to the upper reaches of power and wealth in the kingdom. He's one of hundreds of grandsons of Abdul Aziz bin Abdul Rahman, the man who founded Saudi Arabia in 1932. That makes him more like a distant leaf on a royal family tree with more than 30,000 members. So how does Alwaleed, acting on his own—with no direct access to the kingdom's massive oil riches, go from a borrowed $300,000 nest egg in 1980 to a billion dollars in cash on hand to invest in Citicorp 11 years later? Whispers persist that he is merely the respectable public face of a much larger group of Saudi investors eager to avoid the scrutiny of prying Western eyes.

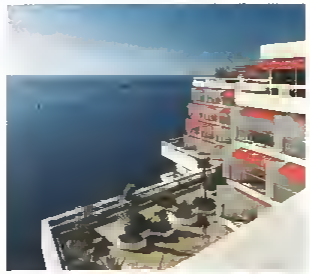
The prince denies this, and insists that his fortune was made through savvy investments. He is fond of telling reporters that his is a "Warren Buffett type operation," a reference to the legendary U.S. investor. He and his advisers describe a strategy in which they seek out companies with strong global brands and good management, which have fallen on hard times and can be bought on the cheap. It's a strategy that made him billions on Citigroup, and provided huge scores on Apple Computer (in which he invested in 1997), Rupert Murdoch's NewsCorp., and the Reichmann family's Canary Wharf development in London.

But like everything with the prince, reality doesn't always mesh with the rhetoric. Some who've worked for Alwaleed complain the master financier can be unreasonably tight-fisted, sometimes arguing for days over relatively minor expenditures like a few thousand dollars in salary or perks. More significant is the fact that Alwaleed has frequently strayed from his Buffettesque principles to disastrous effect. He has taken well publicized beatings on multi-million-dollar investments in WorldCom, EuroDisney and Planet Hollywood, among others. His most famous misstep came in the spring of 2000, when he loudly proclaimed his enthusiasm for Internet stocks, just as the dot-com craze was reaching its manic climax. Five months later, after pouring huge sums of cash into a slew of dot coms, his losses were in the hundreds of millions and Bloomberg News dubbed him "the current reigning champ as the Greatest Fool" on Wall Street.





'ONCE YOU HAVE $6 BILLION, HE SAID, THE MONEY DOESN'T MATTER. "WHAT AM I GOING TO DO, EAT FISH ENCRUSTED WITH DIAMONDS?" '



FAIRMONT'S PROBLEM in Europe was a lack of brand recognition. 'I think I can help,' said the prince. So he bought London's Savoy (above) and the Monte Carlo Grand (right).

SO IS ALWALEED a business savant, or a guy who made a couple of lucky bets and has been living off them ever since? Either way, the fact remains the prince is a force to be reckoned with on world markets—a point driven emphatically home recently.

It was Nov. 7 when Bill Fatt picked up the phone and saw his life's work begin to unravel. Carl Icahn, the infamous American investor known as one of the world's most feared corporate raiders, was putting in a courtesy call to let Fatt know he'd set his sights on Fairmont. The stock had been lagging, management's strategy seemed stalled, and Icahn had acquired about 10 per cent of the stock. He intended to use his investment to force Fairmont to sell to some other major hotel chain.

The next day, Icahn announced his investment, and the vultures immediately began to circle over Fairmont's Toronto headquarters. Icahn's move had put the company "in play," and a month later he made it official: he was offering $40 per share to gain control of the company. Fatt lashed out, calling Icahn one of the "least attractive aspects of American capitalism" and dismissing his takeover bid as "coercive." By late December, 17 other potential buyers had emerged, but only one had the money and inclination to save Fairmont from the predators who would rip it up for spare parts.

Fatt knew the prince had a soft spot for Fairmont, and had shown an unusual willingness to use his personal wealth to help it. Earlier in 2004, for example, he met Alwaleed in New York and confided that it would take the company years to build its franchise in Europe, where it lacked brand recognition and faced soaring real estate values. "He said, 'That's something I think I can help you with,'" Fatt remembers. A few months later, Alwaleed bought London's historic Savoy hotel for $467 million. Then came the purchase of the Monte Carlo Grand in Monaco. Fairmont took over management of both properties and suddenly had its much needed toehold in the European market.

But with Icahn threatening, Fatt would need a much bigger vote of confidence this time. In Riyadh, Alwaleed greeted the news of Icahn's takeover bid with calm resolve. Sources close to the prince say he quickly decided he had no intention of selling, nor would he sit back while others fought over a company he regarded as his own. On Jan. 9, Alwaleed and his partners Colony Capital notified Fairmont they would be bidding $45 a share, about $3.9 billion in cash, for the entire company. Game over.

The whole encounter stands as a demonstration of the immutable law of nature in big business: he who holds the biggest bankroll calls the shots. Icahn was crushed, but there were no hard feelings. Conservative estimates suggest that two months of sabre-rattling, stock trading and lawyers' letters yielded Icahn close to US$70 million in profit. "I happen to know Mr. Icahn was extremely pleased with how things turned out," Fatt says. "In fact he offered to buy me dinner at his favourite New York restaurant to celebrate."

Did Alwaleed overpay for Fairmont? Did his exuberance and his belief in Fatt overwhelm investment discipline? Maybe—before the prince came along with his bid, the company was struggling with weak results at several of its hotels. Slow progress on asset sales had resulted in a sharp drop in earnings, and a tepid outlook for international travel had investors fleeing the industry. But the prince isn't one to trouble himself with the petty sniping of his critics. He regards the hotel business as his entré into high society in the world's major cities. These are places where people meet, dine, get married. They are homes away from home for the international jet set.

And so, Fairmont remains a work in progress—an ever evolving project to feed the prince's obsessive love of the deal. To that end, Alwaleed's Kingdom Holdings recently signalled plans to sell many, if not all, of Fairmont's real estate to focus exclusively on hotel management. Last week, he took a first step, selling the Fairmont Scottsdale Princess resort and adjacent land for US$360 million, maintaining branding rights and a management contract.

All this constant wheeling and dealing has led some to dismiss Alwaleed as nothing more than a dilettante, living out a real-life game of Monopoly. But his friends insist the prince is driven by more substantial desires. "He told me once that it wasn't really about the money," Mankarious recalls. "He said, 'Once you have $6 billion, the money doesn't matter anymore. What am I going to do, eat fish encrusted with diamonds?'" How he arrived at the $6-billion figure is anyone's guess, but in recent years Alwaleed has finally begun to explain that grander vision. While Bill Gates and Warren Buffett pledge billions to eradicate malaria and put more computers in schools, Alwaleed has set for himself a rather loftier objective: World Peace.







EURODISNEY proved a terrible investment, but Citigroup anchors his fortune. The prince sees the hotel business as an entré into high society (with Michael Jackson in 1996, top).

WHAT'S NEXT? WORLD PEACE. HIS BIGGEST MISTAKE? CRITICIZING THE U.S. AFTER 9/11. SUDDENLY, HE WAS JUST ANOTHER ARAB WITH A BIG BANK ACCOUNT.

ONE MONTH AFTER the 9/11 terrorist attacks levelled the World Trade Center, Prince Alwaleed travelled to New York carrying a US$10 million cheque for the Twin Towers Fund for

(FROM LEFT) CP; VINCENT ALMAVY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; MARY ALTAFFER/AP

NO CREDIT

victims' families. He accompanied mayor Rudy Giuliani to Ground Zero, looked out across the still smouldering ruins, and offered his condolences and his donation. By that night, the gesture would turn into the biggest embarrassment of his life.

Never one to pass up an opportunity for publicity, Alwaleed issued a press release expressing his sadness and announcing his gift. But rather than opt for a safe statement of mourning, he veered horribly off course, into an ill-conceived lecture on American foreign policy. "At times like this one, we must address some of the issues that led to such a criminal attack," the release said. "I believe the government of the United States of America should re-examine its policies in the Middle East and adopt a more balanced stance towards the Palestinian cause."



RUDY GIULIANI rejected his $10-million donation after he upbraided the U.S. over 'the Palestinian cause'

For a man who prides himself on his Western sensibility and keen diplomatic instincts, it was an astonishing miscalculation. Giuliani angrily and publicly rejected the donation, and the prince was cast on nightly news shows as just another Arab with a big bank account and a hate on for America. The commotion faded soon enough, but if anything, the humiliation of 2001 only hardened the prince's determination to wade into politics and international relations—a compulsion that seems etched into his genetic code.

Alwaleed's father, Prince Talal, is the maverick reformer of the royal family. Back in the 1950s, Talal campaigned for greater civil liberties, even going so far as to help draft a constitution and call for the devolution of powers to an elected body. His efforts earned him the nickname "Red Prince" and two years of exile in Egypt.

Though he is careful never to directly antagonize the ruling clique, Alwaleed has taken up many of the themes that his father championed decades ago. In public, he lauds the kingdom's baby steps toward greater democratization, including last year's first-ever municipal elections. Last year, he also hired a woman to be his personal pilot. Gestures like that are barely noteworthy in the West, but in a country where women have virtually no standing, the prince's declaration that he is "in full support of Saudi ladies working in all fields" was astonishing.

More recently, Alwaleed has dedicated himself to a high-profile campaign to mend relations between Saudis and Westerners. In 2005, he gave US$20 million to Georgetown University to support its Center for Muslim Christian Understanding, the second-biggest donation ever received by the university. He followed up with another US$20 million to Harvard, for its Islamic Studies department. He also gave US$15 million to establish departments of American studies at universities in Cairo and Beirut. Weeks later, the Louvre received a US$20 million cheque, the biggest single private donation in the museum's history, to help establish a new gallery to display its collection of Islamic art.

All this, the prince says, is part of his mission to promote cross-cultural peace, love and understanding, and to promote the true meaning of Islam, "a religion of humanity, forgiveness and acceptance of other cultures."

As always, there are plenty of skeptics. To them, his insensitivity in the wake of Sept. 11, and his promotion of virulent anti-Americanism on his cable news channel al-Resalah, are proof that beneath the artifice of friendship, Alwaleed is just another Saudi ideologue whose support of the West begins and ends with his interest in the almighty dollar.

But even in today's polarized world, US$24 billion can buy a lot of goodwill, and Alwaleed remains in the market. And there is certainly no shortage of distractions to feed his obsessive pursuit of the next deal, while he waits for his investments in peace and understanding to take hold. For one thing, there is hotel real estate to sell, lots of it. Perhaps some worth buying, too. He's still planning to issue shares in his company on the Saudi stock exchange. He recently bought a US$390-million stake in the Bank of China, spreading the reach of his international empire even further. And there has been talk that his good friend Rupert Murdoch may be ready to buy a stake in Alwaleed's Arabic media giant Rotana. He has even mused about an English-language cable station aimed at better representing the Islamic world to Americans.

Will it ever be enough? Those who know him best aren't betting on it. "I remember calling him once and telling him, 'Congratulations, you own the Monte Carlo Grand hotel,' " Mankarious remembers. "This was a huge, important deal. And we'd been working hard on it for weeks. All he said was, 'Good, where are you going now? What's next?' "

In the prince's world, that is always the question. M



WHAT A WASTE. MANAGER DRINKS ON THE JOB

Bob McCaig manages the 130-hectare Green Lane landfill site near London, Ont., and he's so confident that his site is environmentally sound, he drinks the liquid that leaks from it. "I've drank it many times," he says. "It's a tiny bit sweet. A little bit never hurt anyone." McCaig is making a point at a time when the provincial government authorized a vast expansion at the dump. "I try to stay away from water," he says. "You know what fish do in it."

PHOTOGRAPH BY GEOFF ROBINS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



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INFLICTING MORE PAIN

Clifford Olson's right to a parole hearing every two years sparks outrage

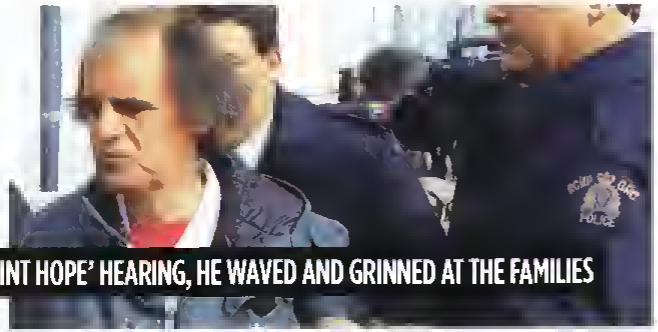
BY BEN MACQUEEN • Clifford Olson had a swell old time on his last day as a free man. It was 25 years ago, Aug. 12, and he was drinking in an isolated Vancouver Island bush with two young female hitchhikers he'd picked up near Nanaimo. They might have been his next victims if an RCMP team hadn't swooped in. His arrest ended a horrific nine-month spree during which Olson raped and murdered 11 teens and children. On July 18, he'll mark that anniversary a few weeks early by doing the one thing at which he excels—inflicting pain. At 8:30 a.m., in the federal prison at Ste-Anne-des-Plaines, Que., Olson will make his case for freedom before the National Parole Board. It is the automatic right of anyone convicted of first-degree murder, after serving the minimum 25 years of a life sentence. And, if parole is denied—as it surely will be—he has the right to a hearing every two years thereafter. The law is the shield of a civilized society, but in the wrong hands it's also a mighty weapon, as the families of Olson's victims can attest.

Members of at least seven of those families will attend the hearing—braced to be victimized again. "There's a lot of pain and suffering," says Gary Rosenfeldt, whose 16-year-old stepson, Daryn, was raped and murdered by Olson. "And every two years," says Rosenfeldt, "we've got to relive this whole damn thing again." He and his wife, Sharon, Daryn's mother, helped found the Victims of Violence Canadian Centre for Missing Children, a support and advocacy group that's working with a former Crown prosecutor, Scott Newark, to lobby for changes. The Conservatives have promised tighter limits on parole, including the repeal of the so-called "faint hope" clause, which allows convicted murderers to seek early release after 15 years. They would not comment on the Olson case, but their plans would not limit the automatic right to regular parole hearings at 25 years.

Victims of violence says it will press the federal government to consider a requirement that those routinely seeking parole must first prove they've taken measures to rehabilitate themselves. "This hearing coming up exemplifies the stupidity," says Newark of Olson. "He is in a freakin' super-maximum prison and yet the law says he's entitled to apply for early release. Hello!"

Elizabeth White, executive director of the St. Leonard's Society of Canada, an offenders' rights group, shares the belief that Olson will not be released and sympathizes with the families, but hopes Ottawa doesn't restrict parole hearings. "It is a horrible situation for the families. But that horrible situation exists simply because Mr. Olson continues to exist," says White. "Twenty-five years is a pretty long time to not look at somebody. After 25 years, people deserve to be looked at."

Meantime, the families prepare for Olson's parole hearing. Some have written victim impact statements. "He's going to be behind bars," says Rosenfeldt. "We're also told there will be a screen separating us so he won't be able to watch us as we give our statements."



ONE FATHER won't give Olson the satisfaction of hearing a victim impact statement

One father has told Rosenfeldt he won't give Olson the satisfaction of knowing his pain. Rosenfeldt himself won't submit a statement either, but his wife, Sharon, and Daryn's younger sister Jana have already suffered the tearful exercise of putting thoughts on paper.

Many wrote similar statements nine years ago, for Olson's "faint hope" hearing. The four-day hearing was one of the most bizarre and unsettling moments in B.C. judicial history. Olson was flown in on an RCMP jet while faraway relatives of Olson's victims paid their own airfare and accommodations. The team of senior corrections officers guarding him was given psychological briefings before and after. The court's public gallery was sealed off by a wall of bullet- and bomb-resistant glass. The hearing itself seemed to serve little purpose except to provide Olson with a massive ego boost. "I know I will never be paroled, I'm not a stupid man," he admitted. During his rambling testimony he claimed responsibility for between 143 and 168 murders in Canada and the U.S., claims the police have investigated and largely dismissed. He seemed bemused at the assessment of two psychologists, one of whom said there is "no safe way" he can ever be released. He sat calmly through victim impact statements so drenched in pain that Joe Bellows, the implacable Crown prosecutor who read them, needed a recess to regain his composure. When his bid for parole was rejected, the families cheered. Olson waved and grinned at the pandemonium on the other side of the glass.

Olson, now 66, lives mostly in isolation in a special handling unit. Rosenfeldt has heard he's in a homosexual marriage in prison, though it's unclear if his unnamed spouse will testify. Next week's hearing gives him, at the least, a break from the monotony of prison life, and at worst a chance to relive his past through the grief of parents and siblings. Yet there really is no choice but to play along, the Rosenfeldts say. You can't risk the impression that it doesn't matter if Olson is set free. So every two years they are doomed to confront the man who laid waste to so many lives—as long as he lives, or until he waives his rights or the law is changed. It's a life sentence for all concerned. M

COLLAR OF THE WEEK

JOYRIDING STUDENT LIKES THEM BIG

When Daniel Matthews went joyriding recently, nobody noticed, despite the fact that he was in a stolen 48-tonne locomotive. The student in Yorkshire, England, handled the engine so expertly that security guards assumed he was an employee. Matthews hot-wired the locomotive with a wrench, and with a friend tooled around the yard for 40 minutes, even pausing to throw track switches. He was convicted of taking a train without consent.

ROY ANTAL/REGINA LEADER POST/CP

HARK— THE KNIGHT IS FALLING!

Sir Richard Branson drops into Toronto to unveil a new music fest

BY LIANNE GEORGE • There are upsides and downsides to being your own brand mascot. Sir Richard Branson, the British billionaire and Virgin Group founder, knows them all. On the one hand, Sir Richard—a dapper corporate action hero with a roguish smile and an implausible mane of feathery, sun-bleached hair—loves adventure ("Screw it, let's do it!" is his personal motto.) So wherever a Virgin product or service is being launched, there he is, strapped to a parachute or a jetpack, riding in a monster truck or a tank. On the other hand, as he inches into his late 50s, the stunt work can get tiring. "I used to plan my own stunts," he said on a recent visit to Toronto. "But now I find I'm sort of like, 'Where am I going tomorrow?' And they'll say, 'Toronto, Richard.' And there's a waiver here. You've got to sign away your life."

Moments later, in the rear of Virgin Mobile Canada's red-and-black party bus, Branson, in jeans and a black Virgin T-shirt, signed away his life, claiming full responsibility for the death-defying act he was about to perform ("I'll have the airline," joked one member of his team. "I'll take the space station!" said another.) Branson was en route to the Docks, an entertainment complex overlooking Lake Ontario, to announce Virgin Festival Canada, a two-day music event to take place at Toronto Island Park in early September.

He had flown in earlier that morning from Washington, where he'd delivered the Virgin Atlantic GlobalFlyer—the first plane to be flown solo, non-stop, around the world—to the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum. "It was lovely to see it hanging there next to the Concorde," he said. Before that, he'd set the record for the world's longest zip-wire slide, starting on the roof of the highest building in Johannesburg and landing in the midst of a Virgin press conference in the parking lot below. Prior to that, he was in Cape Town, shooting 30,000 feet straight up into the sky in a Lightning fighter jet in only 100 seconds.



ROPING THEM IN: The CEO as corporate action hero, descending from a helicopter

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER WAHL

The idea was to illustrate to cellphone users that every second counts. "With other companies," he says, "if you go two seconds over a minute, you're charged for a full minute."

Branson has transformed the promotional stunt into an art form. He holds world records for hot-air ballooning and cross-Atlantic powerboat racing. To date he has never been seriously injured. (Once, he did have a close call on a mouth-controlled flying bicycle. A week later, the inventor died testing the contraption.) When Virgin Galactic Airways launches in 2008, he will be its first astronaut tourist. Adventure is in his blood, he says. His ancestor, the Antarctic explorer Captain Robert Scott, was the second voyager to get to the South Pole. And Branson notes that his grandmother, at 89, became the oldest woman in Britain to pass the advanced Latin American ballroom dancing exam.

On this morning in Toronto, Branson was to rappel 75 feet from a helicopter into a reception room below through a narrow opening in the glass ceiling. It was a windy day. Outside, a team of local stunt experts led by Shelley Cook, a petite blond in her early 40s, briefed the billionaire. Cook has choreographed stunts for dozens of movies, including *Exit Wounds* and *Resident Evil*. "You name it," she said. "I've blown it up, turned it over, smashed it, dumped it. I'm one of the female pioneers in this country." She led the group to a makeshift helipad, a strip of concrete near the water where she began a quick primer. She strapped Branson into a harness. "Do I look foolish?" he asked no one in particular. Here's how you'll slide out onto the skids, she told him. Here's how you'll brake. ("Right hand under bum—copy," he said. "Being dyslexic, I always do the wrong thing.") And here's how you'll avoid smashing your head when you jump. "Lovely. I'm ready. Fun," he said.

At 10:30 a.m., the stunt was moved up by 15 minutes because of a storm brewing at Pearson Airport. Inside, the journalists, cameramen, and stunt technicians stared at the ceiling in anticipation. Finally, the helicopter loomed overhead, filling the room with noise and gusts of wind. Something fell out of the sky and hit the ground with a loud thud. It was not Branson, but a weight attached to a rope. Then, in a blink, Branson descended the rope, unhooked himself, jumped clear and gave a quick thumbs up. The journalists applauded half-heartedly, the photographers clicked, and Branson moved to the podium, where the president and CEO of Virgin Mobile Canada thanked him for "dropping in."

Later, Cook said she was relieved the stunt went so well, given the minimal preparation time she'd been allotted. "My team was great, and Richard did a wonderful job," she said, "but it was one of the most stressful bloody days. You don't want to jeopardize a 30-year career because some bigwig wants to come in and slide down a rope out of a helicopter." M

STOP THE PRESSES!

SURRENDER MONKEYS AREN'T SO BAD AFTER ALL

"We now realize that the French football team can stop the Portuguese—and in particular their cheating, whinging winger Cristiano Ronaldo—from getting to the World Cup final. We apologize profusely to France and its sporting heroes, who we now accept are skilful, brave and the most wonderful neighbours we could ever wish for. Vive La France!"—British tabloid *Daily Star*, July 6, after France trounced the team that trounced England.



FIXING GENERATION XXL

How one (thin) Canadian shrunk the kids: inside the world's first boarding school for fat teens

BY KATE FILLION PHOTOGRAPHS BY DONALD WEBER

Audrey Guth is a Toronto businesswoman with a master's degree in nutrition and a 15-year old who, as of Jan. 30, weighed 321 lb. She and her husband did everything parents are supposed to—no junk food, lots of fruit and vegetables, regular exercise—and they and their three older children are slim.

But Jesse, now nearly six feet tall, has been heavy since he was 5, and the more his mother felt "the external pressure of judgment," she says, "the harder I searched for solutions." He has been on every diet imaginable, including one his mom invented for him, although, she sighs, "I believe in a healthy lifestyle, not dieting." He's tried boxing and exercise regimes and products you order off the TV despite skepticism regarding infomercials that promise miracles. Once, he had a CAT scan: he was gaining so fast, his parents worried he had a brain tumour. His dad has freaked out on him about not being able to stand by and watch his son self destruct, his mom took a six-month vow of silence on the subject of weight, thinking maybe she was part of the problem. Jesse's been to a New York 'fat camp' and a therapist and a doctor who threw up his hands and advised gastric bypass surgery to shrink his stomach.

And so his mother, who runs a personnel agency and is accustomed to feeling in control, was feeling pretty desperate by the time she went on the Internet and discovered Academy of the Sierras, which bills itself as the world's first therapeutic boarding school for overweight adolescents and costs more than Harvard: US$5,800 per month. Most commercial weight loss programs and diet camps emphasize how easy it is to drop pounds while eating the foods you love, but AOS stresses how tough it is in an "obesogenic culture" that promotes fast food and sedentary living—so tough that a stint in a very different kind of culture, with no cellphones or laptops or other teenage trappings, is necessary. Located in Reedley, Calif., the school provides not just a high school curriculum but "an immersion program": an extremely low fat diet, lots of exercise, intensive cognitive-behavioural therapy, extensive self-monitoring, and a system of "positive reinforcement" wherein "privileges"—sitting outside during free time, say—can only be earned through sustained effort.

If it sounds hellish, well, that's because war is hell, and weight control is a form of never-ending warfare. Just ask Oprah. "The enemy" as they say at AOS, "is your own biology," which is programmed to try to regain any weight you lose; the environment, with high-calorie convenience foods and non-stop screen time, is a minefield. What overweight kids need is basic training, and where better to get it than a boot camp-type establishment? This, at any rate, was AOS founder Ryan Craig's reasoning, and how he convinced a company specializing in tough love programs for teens to finance the start-up of a school that in only 22 months has positioned itself on the front lines of adolescent obesity treatment, right beside the cash register.

Craig, an ascetic 36 year-old who rises early and drinks milk and was born and raised in Toronto, had easier ways to make a lot more money: a New York merchant banker, he would have been "set for life" had he stayed put another few years. He's never had a weight problem, unless you count being a little too thin, and exudes a hyper-rational reverence for quantifiable results, all of which is to say, you'd be hard-pressed to find a man less likely to open a boarding school for fat kids in the San Joaquin Valley, the raisin capital of the world—or one less inclined to countenance failure, particularly when his own reputation and millions of dollars are riding on his conviction that AOS can help overweight kids slim down, permanently.

It's hardly a safe bet. Although experts know what should work—fewer calories, more exercise, help from a dietician—it rarely does, says Dr. Jean-Pierre Chanoine of the University of British Columbia, one of the leading pediatric obesity authorities in Canada. "When a very obese kid comes to our clinic, you know his or her chances to get a clinically significant result are small, very small. This has to do with the complexity of the condition—yes, I think this is a disease: you are predisposed and, given the wrong environment, you will develop the weight excess—and the fact that the environment is very difficult to modify."

Of those who do manage to lose weight, "95 per cent regain it all," says Dr. Arya Sharma, professor of medicine at McMaster University and the scientific director of the Canadian Obesity Network. "The only medically proven obesity treatment is medication—though a lot of people can't take it, and for some, it's just not enough—or surgery."

But while Ryan Craig is a big believer in science, he is, as you might expect of a guy who bused tables and attended public school and wound up with a Yale law degree, an even bigger believer in self-determination. "Elite athletes transform their bodies and train them to do things their bodies weren't really meant to do. Weight controllers are like athletes, transforming their bodies and training them to do what we're not meant biologically to do: lose weight. But we can do it, and maintain it, through changing our behaviours," he says, as though he's made this



EXERCISING DAY AND NIGHT Instead of TV, students are expected to swim, work out, or play organized sports before bedtime

particular pitch many times before

He read all the research and found a soulmate in Daniel Kirschenbaum, a psychologist at Northwestern University in Chicago who has published dozens of academic articles and four books on weight loss, whom he hired to design AOS's clinical program. Their theory is simple—if you teach kids how to eat and exercise, train them to use new coping mechanisms so they don't reach for a Big Mac when they fail a math test, and stick with them while they progress through the honeymoon, frustration and acceptance stages of embracing a new lifestyle, you will get clinically significant results. And a nice little business.

Which explains, more or less, how Jesse Guth came to be sitting in the cafeteria at AOS at the end of April, eating scrambled Egg Beaters and weighing 51 lb. less than he had when he arrived three months earlier. He was hungry after walking two miles—all students must exercise before breakfast, a rule that's surprisingly easy to enforce if you wake them at seven, then lock them out of their dorm—but chewed his single slice of dry turkey bacon unhurriedly, and pronounced the taste "acquired. Slowly. Maybe never."

He uses the same raspy, deadpan delivery to declare himself "a metrosexual, actually, and a bit of a clean freak.' Girls, it's becoming clear, now that he wears an XL T-shirt from Old Navy rather than an XXXL from Big and Tall, are into such declarations.

"He's, like, the funniest guy ever," gushes Heather Melms, The Best Friend, who's lost 50 lb. in the past 12 months and looks like a 17-year-old version of Mary Ann from Gilligan's Island. "You can tell him anything and he won't tell anyone, you can trust him."

"Jesse, oh my God, he's just so funny. And nice," says Mya Twersky, his girlfriend, who, to be fair, might have offered a somewhat different appraisal if she'd had any clue he was going to ditch her four days later.

Physical relationships are against the rules, but staff can't be everywhere, so, as Jesse puts it, "there's a lot of drama, and a lot of gossip." A lot of new-found opportunity, too. "Our whole lives, we've been used to not being in relationships," says Kai Pereria, a 17-year-old from Hawaii, dumping the contents of 17 packets of Equal into his decaf coffee. "Then we come here and it's like a big buffet."



CHRIS ABBATIELLO, WEIGHT LOSS: 122 LB.

For boys, anyway, about three-quarters of AOS students are girls. "There just aren't enough of us to go around," says Jesse, who's decided he likes the place, despite the discomfort of attending group therapy with his ex and the ongoing histrionics that occur when you throw a bunch of teenagers together 24/7.

AOS is located 25 unglamorous miles south east of Fresno, on an isolated 68-acre campus complete with squawking emus, green playing fields and a cluster of dated, low-slung buildings that once housed a psychiatric facility. The place still has something of a locked ward, circa 1950, ambience: dorm windows are alarmed, mail is searched for contraband like gum or cash, and snitches are everywhere. It's simply not possible to drink, do drugs, have sex, hang at the mall or even watch TV (unless you're working out on a treadmill).

And yet, in this alternate universe, a couch potato can reinvent himself as something of a jock. All he has to do is work like a maniac every day for the rest of his life to fight his body's inclination to store fat.

Some kids find that message alarming or dispiriting, and beg their parents to rescue them. Others, like Jesse, find it oddly invigorating. "For a long time, I used to think, Yeah, I'm overweight, but it doesn't matter. I was like an alcoholic who didn't think he had a problem. This is going to sound weird, but I didn't really see myself; I just saw the person I wanted to be."

AOS has shown him how to get there. And the notion of going into battle to defend your own health is kind of cool, even if, as it turns out, your main weapon is old-fashioned self-discipline.



AT 15, Jahcobie weighed 483 lb. 'If I hadn't come here, I would have died,' he says

Some of the kids at AOS are just fat, others are spectacularly large, and walk with the laboured, rocking gait of elephants. Many know each other from diet camps, and they all say the school is different. "There, they fed you then made you run around. You'd lose weight but by the end of September, you'd gain it all back. Here, they teach you, so you learn how

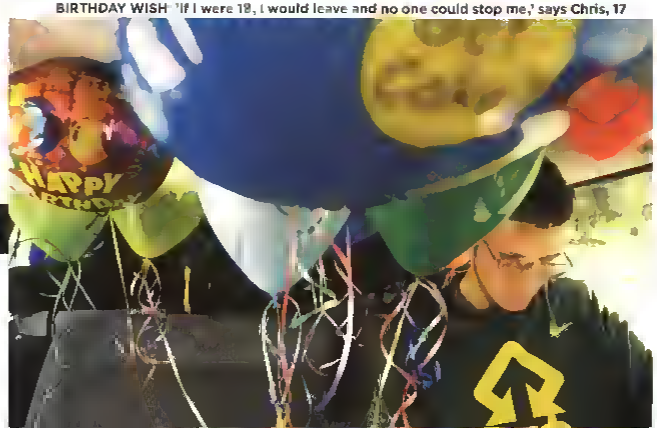
JAHCOBIE COSOM, TOTAL WEIGHT LOSS: 176 LB.

to do it for yourself at home,' says Sammy Levy, 15, who is from Scarsdale, N.Y., and has an uncanny facial resemblance to J. Lo.

"They taught us that back in the time of hunters and gatherers when food was scarce, humans survived by storing fat," says Jesse. "My body is very efficient when it comes to storing fat. You and I could eat the same thing, but my body would store it as fat and your body would burn it off. And once you have fat cells, you can't get rid of them, they're always there, waiting to be fed, like hungry sparrows. Partly it's genetic, my mom was overweight as a kid."

And partly it's environment. In the past three decades, kids' fast food consumption has soared while physical activity has decreased, for reasons ranging from the proliferation of remote controls to parents' unwillingness to let kids run around unsupervised, lest they be abducted. Consequently, Canadian teens are fatter than ever: in 2004, 20 per cent between the ages of 12 and 17 were overweight, another nine per cent were obese. But the numbers are rising. *The International Journal of Pediatric Obesity*, whose very existence testifies to the scope of the problem, estimates that by 2010, half of all North American adolescents will be overweight.

The strain on the health care system will be huge. Obesity is associated with, among many other things, insulin resistance, diabetes, hypertension, obstructive sleep apnea, depression, orthopaedic issues and increased risk for serious cardiovascular and liver trouble as well as several types of cancer. The health implications, short term but especially long term, are terrible and expensive, which is one reason the Canadian government is focusing resources on prevention.



BIRTHDAY WISH 'If I were 18, I would leave and no one could stop me,' says Chris, 17

The other is that conventional treatment is so likely to fail, because "there are a number of defence mechanisms built into your brain and hard-wired into your body whose sole purpose is to bring your weight back to what it was," explains Sharma, who is spearheading a movement to increase the accessibility of bariatric surgery, which includes several different procedures to reduce the stomach's capacity. But surgery is trickier and carries more risks and unknowns for adolescents, and most surgeons prefer to wait until kids reach their full height because afterward, the body can't absorb nutrients in the same way. Anyway, operating is just the beginning: patients must still modify their behaviour, eat much less and exercise more (20 to 30 per cent of adults can't do it, and regain the weight).

At AOS, they believe kids can learn to do all that without surgery, if you put them in a controlled environment yet give them enough leeway to fail, so they build up the self-discipline they'll need in the real world. Although higher-calorie items, such as low-fat chicken tacos, are dished out behind a counter, students are permitted unlimited amounts of "uncontrolled foods" like fruit, vegetables, soup, no-fat yogourt and diet pop. The resulting cuisine is not exactly organic: it's not uncommon to see kids swilling Diet Coke at breakfast or eating Splenda right out of the packet.

Extreme measures for extreme problems is the school's unofficial motto—"Moderation doesn't work for a kid who's 100 lb. overweight," says Craig—and students are expected to eat just seven to 12 grams of fat per

day (one tablespoon of fat reduced-fat peanut butter has five grams). Fat is linked to feelings of satiety, and any expert not in the employ of AOS will tell you such a low amount is not sustainable, but with three meals and two snacks, no one there is going hungry.

In order to instill "a healthy obsession," students self-monitor religiously, recording every calorie and fat gram so they're conscious of what they're eating, and take culinary skills classes to learn about nutrition, portion size and low-fat cooking. They also wear pedometers and take at least 10,000 steps a day (more than twice the U.S. average), though most clock far more, what with the morning walk and at least two more activity periods where options range from soccer to swimming to working out with a trainer. Then there's individual and group therapy three times a week, and, oh yeah, six hours a day of high school classes.

Students have just 95 minutes of free time daily. How you get to spend them depends on your place in the five-tiered "summit system", to move up and get more privileges, you must prove consistent self-monitoring and physical activity. Jesse recently reached Ascender, the third level, so he has 60 whole minutes of phone time a week and, finally, an email account.

Teenagers either view all this as oppressive yet slowly lose some weight, or they view it as helpful and rapidly lose astonishing amounts and tell anyone who will listen that AOS has saved their lives. Yes, says Jesse, it's hard, but there's comfort in finding out that stuff you thought was just you—hiding candy from your parents and sneaking pieces one at a time because that way it doesn't count, or refusing to go to a sleepover because someone might see you changing—is actually normal.

Everyone at AOS is familiar with the fear of walking, because of the way your thighs chafe, sometimes until they bleed. And the panic you feel on an airplane, wondering whether you'll get the seatbelt done up this time, and the misery of having people talk about you like you aren't even human. And you did try to diet, your mom bought those low carb bars, but your sister, who's, like, a stick, insists on having Doritos in the house and then you'd look in the mirror and get depressed and eat them, plus anything else in the kitchen that wasn't nailed down.

Being around people who actually understand is awesome. So is swimming again—here, who cares what you look like in a bathing suit? (Especially since some people look way worse.) You can play softball and, okay, maybe you can't make it to first base before the ball does, but still every one's yelling encouragement, not *Look at fat-ass!*, and it turns out you're a pretty good outfielder. At group, you say you're working your program fine, thank you, then someone goes, "Cut the crap, I saw you eat three bowls of cottage cheese at lunch," and sure, it pisses you off, but then you realize the only person that cottage cheese is hurting is you.

Actually having a peer group, rather than two fellow geeks whose chief attraction is that they tolerate your presence, is likely the most important ingredient of AOS's success. In this abnormal setting, The Fat Kid finally gets to feel normal.

"The academics here are like an old car—nothing special, but you get where you need to go," Jesse announces one day at lunch. Classrooms are less than modern—the desks are too small for some students, there's only one overhead projector in the entire school, air conditioning and heating are both erratic—and while students, even the malcontents, praise the dedication of the teaching staff, they are underpaid and overburdened by the demands of teaching classes that include kids who range in age from 12 to 19, many of whom were doing poorly in the real world.

The real world is a big topic at AOS.

One morning, trudging down the road in grey sweatpants as the sun rises over the fruit orchards surrounding the school, Jahcobre Cosom, 16, who has lost close to 200 lb. but still weighs more than 300, says, "You know you're fat when they ask you to leave the all you-can-eat buffet."

"That happened to me too," says his friend, a six-footer who's lost 72 lb. and is within striking distance of buff. "And once I snuck out at night and took my mom's car to go to McDonald's, which was considered auto theft because I didn't have my licence yet. The cops are arresting me and I'm like, 'Can I still get my double cheeseburgers, two McChickens and a large fries?'"

There's a lot of talk about food at AOS, the way the cheese bubbles on a deep-dish pizza, the creaminess of chocolate chip cookie dough ice cream. These reminiscences tend to have the same elegiac tone you might hear at AA, minus the rueful, repentant commentary on hangovers and human wreckage.

"I think kids are much more complicated and the culture is much more permissive than it was even 10 years ago," says Molly Carmel, AOS's clinical director. "Cellphones, Internet, it's such an instant gratification world, there's no frustration tolerance." No time, in other words, to stop to think about consequences, like how bad you'll feel if you finish the whole box of cookies.

For some, weight seems to be the least of their problems; they talk about drinking, drugging, depression, vandalism, failing grades, their parents' substance abuse issues and messy divorces. Many girls had been in the habit of cutting themselves, three confided they'd been raped, and eating a lot is a good way to get guys to leave you alone.

"A lot of kids come in here pretty dark, pretty down. About a third are on psychotropic medications," says Carmel, who adds that weight loss acts as a catalyst for other changes. "The other things get better as the kid loses weight. Because what we're providing is treatment."

Many U.S. insurers agree, and cover a portion of the cost. Even so, AOS is incredibly expensive; one third of the families take loans to pay for it, and some kids, like Jahcobre, are on full scholarships, sponsored by charities, pharmaceutical companies or media outlets like *Extreme Makeover* that film the transformation.

Obesity is far more prevalent among lower socio-economic groups, and Ryan Craig wants to start a non-profit to help even more kids, but he makes no apologies for the school's tuition. It's a business, after all, and not yet consistently profitable. "This program would never happen if you waited for some not-for-profit or government organization. Who's going to invest that money? Just about every important medical innovation that's come along in the past 50 years has been funded privately."

In this case, by Aspen Education, a major player in the troubled teens industry. Aspen specializes in programs for kids who are so out of control that their parents must hire professionals to wrangle them out of bed in the middle of the night and convey them to the wilderness for a last-chance, boot camp experience that runs about US$445 a day. Craig came to the company via the private equity firm Warburg Pincus, where he was a Manhattan-based vice president, he invested US$15 million of their money in Aspen, and in return got a board seat, which he used as a pulpit to preach about the market opportunity created by the obesity epidemic.

When Aspen, which is headquartered in Cerritos, Calif., decided to take Craig's advice and create its own program, he asked for the job. "The work of private equity investing is lucrative," says Craig, who, post-Yale, had helped start an online education company. "But I missed rolling up my shirt sleeves and building." He also missed his wife, a TV writer then working for *ER*, he'd been commuting to L.A. every weekend.

So he moved out west and lined up an advisory board of big name obesity experts and somewhere along the way went from viewing fat as a solid foundation for profit to deciding his mission in life is tackling adolescent obesity, and it would be a good idea to spend the first two semesters living in the dorms with the kids (his wife, who joined him on weekends, was somewhat less enthusiastic).

Only a handful of kids turned up on the first day, but they did so well that the school anointed itself "the most successful weight-loss program ever developed for teenagers." Their poster boy is Terry Henry, who arrived weighing 591 lb., a number that could only be verified on a cattle scale, lost 350 lb. in 16 months, and has, to date, kept it off.

The average length of stay is eight to nine months, but AOS provides ongoing after-care via Internet and phone, not least because Craig is determined to collect data to prove long-term weight loss. So far, 15 students have completed two semesters and been home for 10 months, on average, they were 100 per cent overweight upon arrival at AOS, 42 per cent overweight when they left, and



NIGHT PATROL. Founder Ryan Craig (left) and Phil Obbard



LINDSEY TIPOGRAPH, TOTAL WEIGHT LOSS: 57.4 LB.



LOREN CHILDRESS, TOTAL WEIGHT LOSS: 63 LB.

PROM NIGHT. Finding a dress that would still fit a week later was the big challenge



BETWEEN US. Kainoa Pareda and Rebecca Martinez have a combined weight loss of 158 lb.

now, 10 months later, 41 per cent overweight—maintaining, in other words. Despite the small sample and relatively short period of time, "the results are impressive," says Chanoine of UBC.

While Craig is busy planning a second school in North Carolina and operating summer camps in four locations, the school's day-to-day operations are overseen by some other young, hard-driving Ivy Leaguers like his Yale buddy Phil Obbard, who gave up a career in Internet development to be the school's executive director, and Molly Carmel, who used to weigh 325 lb. and now wears a size 10.

"I am the biggest proponent of maintaining a little anxiety," says Carmel, 28, who has the slightly bossy charm of a talk show host and is the subject of tearful Molly changed-my-life tributes as well as tirades from kids who resist her in-your-face style. "Last week she flipped out because at weigh-in, half of us had gained weight or lost less than two pounds. She goes 'Why are you guys fucking up?' I'm sorry? Generally adults don't talk like that," said one girl. "It's kind of mean."

Carmel shrugs. "We're not scared they're not going to be our friends, like of their parents are. A lot of these kids' structure in their lives before they



IF THE SHIRT FITS: Jesse donated old XXXL shirts to an AOS swap-and-shop event

JESSE GUTH, TOTAL WEIGHT LOSS: 76 LB.

no idea about getting up in the morning or eating three meals or going to bed at a certain time. And though kids will fight you tooth and nail, they crave structure."

Although no one at AOS will say so, and although it flies in the face of conventional wisdom as well as academic research, part of the school's success must be connected to the fact that kids are cut off from their families. Parents are permitted to visit just once a month—but many live too far away—and for a weekend of workshops. Some are too indulgent, even sending care packages with candy. Others, says Craig, have "almost a Munchausen's thing, where the child gets better and the parent is upset, because the parent has defined their identity based on the need to help their sick child."

Although long-term success would seem to depend on a family's willingness to, at the very least, make over the kitchen and toss the chips, "some are just not on board," says Carmel. "People think recovery from alcohol is hard, recovery from drugs is hard, but that weight control should be easy, they shouldn't have to change their houses or activities or behaviour. We try to help the kids plan around unsupportive families."

"I just get the feeling sometimes that a bunch of rich people are shopping out their kids and trying to get someone else to 'fix' them," says one staffer, who questions whether AOS is the right place for some of its more oppositional wards. The school's approach with hotheads and slackers is to try to show them their actions have unpleasant consequences, like being sent to live in a tent on an island adjacent to the main campus, where kids have to rough it, cook for themselves and make do with even fewer privileges. The Sietra Adventure Program, as it's called, has been "so successful at accelerating behavioural change," as Phil Obbard puts it, that all students who enter mid-term—the school has rolling admissions—are now required to complete four weeks, minimum, at SAP.

For kids who still don't get it, there's always deportation to an Aspen wilderness program. "You have no rights, at night you have to give them all your clothes and shoes so you can't run away. It's pretty hard core, the people are there for anything ranging from assault and battery to attempted murder. I was scared for the first week, yeah," says Chris Abbatiello of Pennsylvania. He was Jesse's roommate, but frequently missing in action he spent 38 days this spring at a wilderness program in North Carolina because "I was making poor choices," and for most of the month of May, while torrential rains pounded and eventually swamped the island, slept in a musty tent at SAP.

ANNYA Magallanes (far left), who lost 150.4 lb., and Sammy Levy (right) learn to cook



"It's really stupid. I've lost 120 lb., and my parents could get me a psychiatrist at home to do the emotional growth stuff, versus $5,800 a month," he said one evening, swatting mosquitoes at the campsite. The next day, the five SAP kids sat glowering in a mini-van in 85 degree heat, waiting to leave for a four-day camping trip/growth experience. Obbard, who is tall, thin and generally mild-mannered, bounded out to wish them well, but took one look at Chris' face—it was his 17th birthday, and he was decidedly not a happy camper—and instead said, "Doesn't it ever get old, Chris?" To which Chris replied wearily, "I hate this school."

It was hard not to respect the guy's sheer orneriness given the implacable nature of Aspen's response to kids who don't toe their line and his parents' seeming willingness to bankroll "consequences" ad infinitum. In June, however, Chris finally got his way and went home for good.

Experts like Sharma and even Kirschenbaum, the architect of AOS's program, decry the old idea that fat kids are lazy and greedy. The problem is biological, they say, and compassion is in order.

Nevertheless, the cure AOS is offering consists in large part of being a lot less lazy and a lot less gluttonous. And the least compassionate, it seems, are the newly thin. "They kind of forget that they used to be fat and no one liked them," says Sammy Levy. "The skinnier, cuter guys forget all that."

"This is why I hate teenagers," agrees Lindsay Sauln, 17. "We're not understanding."

By June, Jesse, who had dumped another girl and signed on for the summer session because "I don't want to do this in a half-assed way," was of the same mind. "I get picked on more here than I did at home, even about my weight. Pretty ironic, huh?" The problem, he thinks, is that "a lot of the kids have been picked on for so long and they finally have the opportunity to make other people feel bad."

There's an alternate, more unsettling, explanation. "Thin isn't the awesome, perfect life they thought it was going to be," says Carmel.

"God, I'm so fat. So wide. I still feel like I weigh 202," says Loren Childress, 15, who actually weighs 139, trying on her prom dress in front of a dorm room mirror surrounded by photos of models. "They're pretty," Sammy says quietly.

"You look great, too," says Lindsey Tipograph, 15, and it's true, but Loren and Sammy shake their heads. No. Lindsey, who is much further from her goal weight than they are, droops.

"You know what?" says Loren, adjusting the strap of her pink dress. "I'm going to another school when I get home. I just want to be around other people, where they don't know I was ever heavy."

Some kids won't be able to hide the evidence: many have stretch marks, all over, and sloppy pouches of saggy skin. Getting rid of all that extra skin entails multiple surgeries, significant scarring and costs about $20,000, says Dr. Achilleas Thoma, program director of plastic surgery at McMaster University. He isn't keen to operate on adolescents, because they haven't proved they have kept the weight off, though he makes an exception for boys who require, in effect, breast lifts.

If AOS is a last resort, in Canada, "There's no first resort," says Sharma. "The average cab driver knows more about obesity than your family doctor."

And there often aren't the resources to deliver the help that's required, says Dr. Michael Falk, an adolescent medicine specialist at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto. "The focus now is research and prevention, which is great, but what's out there for the morbidly obese inner-city 16-year old with insulin resistance? Not a whole lot." There simply aren't enough programs like the one at Stollery Children's Hospital in Edmonton, where overweight kids and their families can get comprehensive services.

But whether, even with the intensive help available at AOS, kids can make permanent changes in their lives, remains to be seen. "I see them go home for their 'off-campus challenges' and see the results: more than 50 per cent gain weight, some as much as 10 lb. in five days," says one AOS staff member. One kid went home for a visit and scarfed 72 pieces of pizza.

Nevertheless, this is likely the best non-surgical intervention money can buy, though in the end, regardless of how much parents spend and how many millions Aspen has at play, it will all come down to whether kids like Jesse can just say no to pizza for the rest of their lives.

Daily exercise and a radically low-fat diet will not be easy to sustain, nor will daily self-monitoring in a food journal, which is linked to long-term success. But Jesse, who has lost 76 lb. and is now able to run up a flight of stairs without panting, is planning to continue losing weight when he leaves AOS at the end of the month. Despite sticking with a program few of his never-fat peers could tolerate for a week, he never really thought of himself as a conquering hero until he came back to Toronto to see his family for a few days last month. Then he went shopping at Roots, where, for the first time, everything fit, and dropped by his old school, where one girl who'd never been that friendly before squealed, "Jesse, you're f— king sexy!" He went right home and promised his mom he'd never shop in the husky section again. M

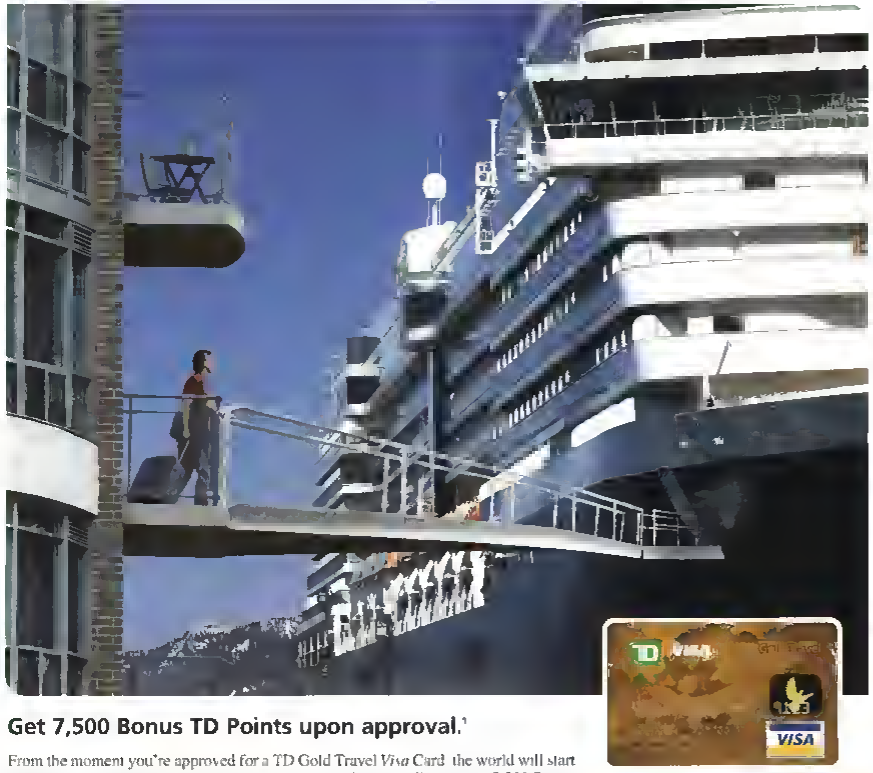
ON THE WEB *For more photos by Donald Weber, visit* www.macleans.ca/gallery



LOS ANGELES OFFICIALS NIX HOOTER NEUTERS

The city of Los Angeles has distanced itself from this Thursday's "Hooters for Neuters" bikini contest, intended to raise money for the animal services department. Women's groups and female city workers raised an outcry after the restaurant chain offered up the contest. While L.A. shied away, other cities have had Hooters competitions to encourage owners to spay their pets. One held in Utah in 2004 declared, "Real Men Neuter Their Best Friends."

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The two lives of Sexy Rex Goudie

How many biographies of a *Canadian Idol* runner-up do we need?

BY NICHOLAS KÖHLER • Two St. John's, Nfld., publishing houses are this fall slated to release competing biographies—one authorized, the other not—of Rex Goudie, last year's *Canadian Idol* runner-up. Goudie, a 20-year-old former auto mechanic from tiny Burlington, Nfld., was catapulted to fame by the show, losing to 18-year-old Melissa O'Neil but nevertheless securing a record contract with Sony BMG. O'Neil, a Calgary native with whom Goudie performed during a subsequent cross-Canada tour, was later revealed to be his girlfriend, a fairy-tale romance that captured the imagination of fans. Then, in February, Goudie's hastily produced debut CD, *Under the Lights*, earned two major Juno nominations, eclipsing O'Neil's own freshman effort.

Devilishly handsome, with a disarming and natural way before television cameras and a Newfoundland twang as thick as gravy on Jiggs' dinner—Newfoundland's traditional Sunday lunch—Goudie is an appealing figure. In his home province, he is considered more than that: a small-town, true-blue islander who even on the slick *Idol* sets of Toronto revelled in his roots, pouring on the brogue whether the *Canadian Idol* judges understood him or not. "He's reached superstar status in the eyes of Newfoundlanders," says Donna Francis, head of sales and marketing at Creative Books, one of the publishers releasing a Goudie book this fall. "He just crawled out from under a truck and went and tried out on a dare—he never ever tried to come across as anything other than that."

The two biographies both promise to detail the singer's rise to fame against the backdrop of strong family ties and an upbringing on the island's north coast. They are being written by two St. John's journalists with remarkably similar names: Kevin Kelly, author of *Guts and Glory*—the unauthorized book—is a senior editor with the *Newfoundland Herald* entertainment magazine and, according to Flanker Press, a "Rex-pert" without parallel. Kim Kielley, a columnist and associate editor with *The Express*, is writing *Idolized*, the authorized book.

Though they have never met, both writers look askance at the other's work. "There's an unauthorized biography going out," says Kielley, noting her exclusive access to Goudie since he signed a contract with Creative Books early this year. "The stuff that I've accumulated nobody else has," she says. "This is a biography that goes right back to the day he was born." The book is to be crammed with never-before-seen photographs of the singer culled from the Goudie family photo album, adds Creanve's Francis. "Rex has signed a contract with us, he's working with us," she says. "Our author's been out to visit his parents, she's talked to his family, to his grandmother." Retorts Kelly: "I'm not sure what the other biography is going to entail, but I know my biography is going to be about the story of Rex Goudie." He adds of his competitors: "They'll have baby pictures."

Both Kielley and Kelly make no secret of how they feel about Goudie. Kelly, who for years has followed *Canadian Idol* as a reporter, admits to voting for Goudie 180 times in a one hour period from a St. John's pay phone the night that decided the competition's victor. "Is it possible for a 43-year-old woman to have a crush on somebody half her age?" asks Kielley. "I'd be writing about him if he was turning wrenches."

As for Goudie, he admits to some initial unease with the project. "To be honest with you, at first I was a little bit skeptical," he says. "I mean, how much can you write about somebody who's 20 years old?" Still, he understood what was at stake. "If I didn't sign on board, there was guaranteed to be somebody to do one anyway—so it was a bit of a business issue at first." As for the unauthorized work, "There's nothing legally that I can do," he says. Kelly is "a decent human being," Goudie allows. "I know he's not going to do anything unorthodox."



GOUDIE, 20, a former auto mechanic, likes to fish. 'There's not a lot of muck to rake'

Kelly agrees. "From what I've seen of Rex," he says, "there's not a lot of muck to rake." Still, when Goudie last week returned to Toronto from his latest Newfoundland tour, he moved into a new apartment overlooking Lake Ontario. Have he and Melissa—they're still an item—shacked up? "I'll say no comment to that," Goudie says. M

COURTESY OF CTV

DAY IN THE SUN

MAN EATS DOGS, FEELS DISPLEASED

Takeru Kobayashi last week won his sixth Coney Island, N.Y., hot dog eating competition, stuffing 53 ¾ dogs in 12 minutes. While 25,000 spectators watched, Kobayashi, who weighs only 170 lb., bested his rival Joey Chestnut, who managed only 52 dogs, despite weighing 55 lb. more. Kobayashi was dissatisfied with his performance this year, and vows to best his record next time. "I can do more, but I'm not sure I want to tell you how many."

★ WORLD CUP SPECIAL ★

Italy may have won the title, but there were other great performances during World Cup 2006



BEST MASCOT

Diego Maradona [1]

The legendary Argentinian forward supported his team by dancing, screaming and shaking his out-of-shape body from the cheap seats. Except, that is, when they needed him most. Maradona refused to attend his team's quarter-final loss to Germany after a member of his entourage was refused entry.

BIGGEST FLOPS

United States

Ranked fifth in the world when the tournament began, the U.S. team managed only four shots on goal during their three games—the lowest of any team in the tourney (Trinidad and Tobago had seven; Tunisia had eight).

Brazil [2]

The five-time World Cup champions lost the fancy footwork that made them the heavy favourites in Germany in their 1-0 quarter-final loss to France.

BEST ENTOURAGE

The Wags

England's wives and girlfriends reportedly spent more than US$620,000 shopping and partying in Germany. Unfortunately, Prada and Gucci don't sell goals—something their men desperately needed in their quarter-final loss to Portugal.

BEST EXIT

Wayne Rooney [3]

The English forward was issued a red card—and tossed from England's final World Cup contest—after stepping on a Portuguese player's privates. "I did not intentionally put my foot down on Ricardo Carvalho," Rooney said. "He slid in from behind me and unfortunately ended up in a position where my foot was inevitably going to end up as I kept my balance."

'HE ENDED UP IN A POSITION WHERE MY FOOT WAS INEVITABLY GOING TO END UP'
—WAYNE ROONEY

BEST POST-GOAL CELEBRATIONS

Alberto Gilardino

After scoring Italy's first goal against the U.S., the striker turned to his adoring fans, waved his hands as if to ask for silence, before dropping to his knees to play an air violin.

Ivan Kaviedes

After scoring against Costa Rica, the Ecuadorian forward pulled a Spider-Man mask out of his shorts and stretched it over his face in honour of former teammate Otilino Tenorio, who died in a car crash last year. Tenorio, who was 29, would often don the mask after scoring and was given the superhero nickname.

BEST ACTOR

Thierry Henry

The crafty French forward fell to the ground clutching his face after a chest-to-chest collision with Spain's Carles Puyol. The ref called a controversial foul on Puyol, and on the ensuing free kick, France scored their second goal in a 3-1 victory.

BEST HEAD-BUTT

Zinedine Zidane [4]

The French captain lost his cool and slammed his head into the chest of Italian defender Marco Materazzi. The soccer legend got tossed from the title game but still won the Golden Ball award as the tournament's best player.

OVERCOMING ADVERSITY

Oswaldo Sanchez

Two days before his team's first game against Iran, the Mexican goalkeeper was forced to return home for the funeral of his father, who died suddenly of a heart attack. Sanchez promptly returned to Germany and went on to play a starring role for his squad.

OVERCOMING OBESITY

Ronaldo

Brazilian striker set a record when he scored his 15th goal—most ever in World Cup play—despite moving around the pitch with a spare tire around his waist.

GOUHIER-HAHN ORRAIN/CAMELEON/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (1) ALEX GRIMM/REUTERS (2) MARTIN RICKETT/AP (3) REUTERS (4)





★ CAMERAMEN'S FAVOURITES ★

Germany not only provided a grand stage for the world's finest soccer talent, but also an international runway for the wives and girlfriends who showed up to cheer on their men:

As always, the most attention was bestowed on **Victoria Beckham** [2], the glamorous wife of the English team captain, who snuck away for a couple of days soon after play began and ended up in Winnipeg. There, she reportedly met with Canadian jean designer 1921.

The former Spice Girl was often flanked at games by **Cheryl Tweedy** [1], a pop singer and fiancée of defender Ashley Cole. After returning home to England, Tweedy spoke out against other English wives and girlfriends for living off their men's money.

Janelle Khouri [3], the Canadian girlfriend of England's Calgary-born midfielder Owen Hargreaves, kept a low profile. The former Canadian national team soccer player is currently at school in Florence.

Czech model **Alena Seredova** [4], the girlfriend of Italy's goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, took part in the pre-Cup fashion show.

★ TAKING SHOTS ★

"If Brazil are the best team in the World Cup then I am Geri Halliwell."—**Elton John** [5]

"Germans criticize us but then they want to dress and eat like us."—Italian defender **Alessandro Nesta**.

"If they make noise or cheer as they watch, they will lose their monkhoods."—Phnom Penh leader **Non Nget** warned Buddhist monks in Cambodia that getting too excited while watching the World Cup has consequences.

"The only time they would be happy is if it was square and heavy."—U.S. head coach **Bruce Arena** [8] dismissing goalkeepers' complaints about the 2006 World Cup ball—15 million of the Adidas balls [10] have been sold worldwide since it was released.

"We can barely sleep because of the croaking. We are going to hunt them."—Ukraine defender **Vladislav Vashchuk** [6] blamed mating frogs outside the team's hotel for why his team was thrashed 4-0 by Spain.

"No one has nicer teeth than me. Why would anyone laugh at my lovely teeth?"—**Ronaldinho**, Brazil's star forward.

"Goooooal! Game over! Italy win! Beat the Australians! Italy the great! The victory belongs to Italy, to everyone who loves Italian soccer! [Australia] should go home. Farewell!"—Chinese TV announcer **Huang Jianxiang** [7], who made international headlines and apologized for his on-air outburst that favoured the Azzurri (it has since become a popular ringtone in China).

"We might as well take up basketball if they are going to blow for every slight contact."—Swiss captain **Johann Vogel** [9], after five teammates were booked by the refs against France.

"Victoria is very thin. I leaned forward to kiss her but almost missed."—Tory leader **David Cameron** after meeting the famous Mrs. Beckham.

"There are the tackles from behind I've seen go unpunished and the violent conduct that has escaped sanction, not to mention the serious errors made in applying rules."—FIFA president **Sepp Blatter** blasted the refs.

KAI PFAFFENBACH/REUTERS (1 & 2). PAUL EDWARDS/THE SUN (3). CHRISTOF STACHE/AP (4). DAVIDSON/GOFFINF.COM (5). TONY MARSHALL/CF (6). NO CREDIT (7). FRIEDEMANN VOGEL/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES (8). PASCAL LAUENER/REUTERS (9). LARS BARON/GETTY IMAGES (10). TOBY MELVILLE/REUTERS (10)

★ NOT YOUR AVERAGE SOCCER HOOLIGANS ★

A German motorist who crashed his car through a barrier around Berlin's World Cup "fan mile," injuring more than 20 people, is being investigated for attempted murder.

Angered by late-night revellers celebrating Portugal's quarter-final win over England, a man shot and wounded two fans outside his apartment near Nice. When police arrived, the 58-year-old postal worker threatened them with a sword. He was promptly shot and killed.

A pair of Islamic gunmen in Somalia were accused of opening fire on a crowd of young demonstrators who were protesting a ban on watching the World Cup in the African country. A cinema owner—who was screening the Germany-Italy semifinal—and a young girl were killed.

Two men were arrested in Berlin and accused of causing bodily harm by placing cement-filled soccer balls around the city and inviting people to kick them. At least two people were injured.





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NEWSMAKERS





★ OFFSIDE ★

Red and yellow cards were being issued with abandon off the field as well

Following Mexico's 3-1 win over Iran in their opener, the team's chain-smoking head coach **Ricardo La Volpe** [1] received a letter from FIFA requesting that he refrain from lighting up on the sidelines. Apparently, league officials became annoyed when television cameras picked up the stylish Mexican puffing second-hand smoke into the pitch.

About a thousand Dutch fans showed up for an early rounder against Ivory Coast in orange dungarees with a Dutch brewery logo on them. Since FIFA had received millions to make Budweiser the World Cup's official beer, the fans were forced to drop their pants to get through the stadium gates. "I watched the game in my underpants," said a Dutch fan. "Fortunately I had quite a long T-shirt."

Authorities in Nuremberg handed out the "Fans' Guide" to thousands of English fans in Germany at the start of the World Cup in the hope of curtailing riotous behaviour. The blue card detailed how fans should behave. Playing nice meant refraining from the Nazi salute, which was high on the list. Goose-stepping and wearing Nazi helmets—although not illegal—were identified as being offensive to Germans.



★ DOS AND DON'TS ★

The most original World Cup hairstyles

Argentinian defenders **Juan Sorin** and **Fabricio Coloccini** [2] battled it out in the backfield over who has more delicate tresses.

Angola defender **Loco** [3] could be called crazy for sporting nothing more than dreadlock bangs.

Swedish midfielder **Christian Wilhelmsson** [4] may have single handedly brought back the rat-tail. Or maybe not.

Ivory Coast's **Ndri Romaric**'s [5] perfectly channelled former NBA star Dennis Rodman.

Chun-Soo Lee [6] went big and blond, but the South Korean midfielder and his teammates didn't have much fun after getting grouped with Brazil and Australia in the opening round.

Ronaldinho's [7] game is certainly beautiful. His long locks, however, are another story.

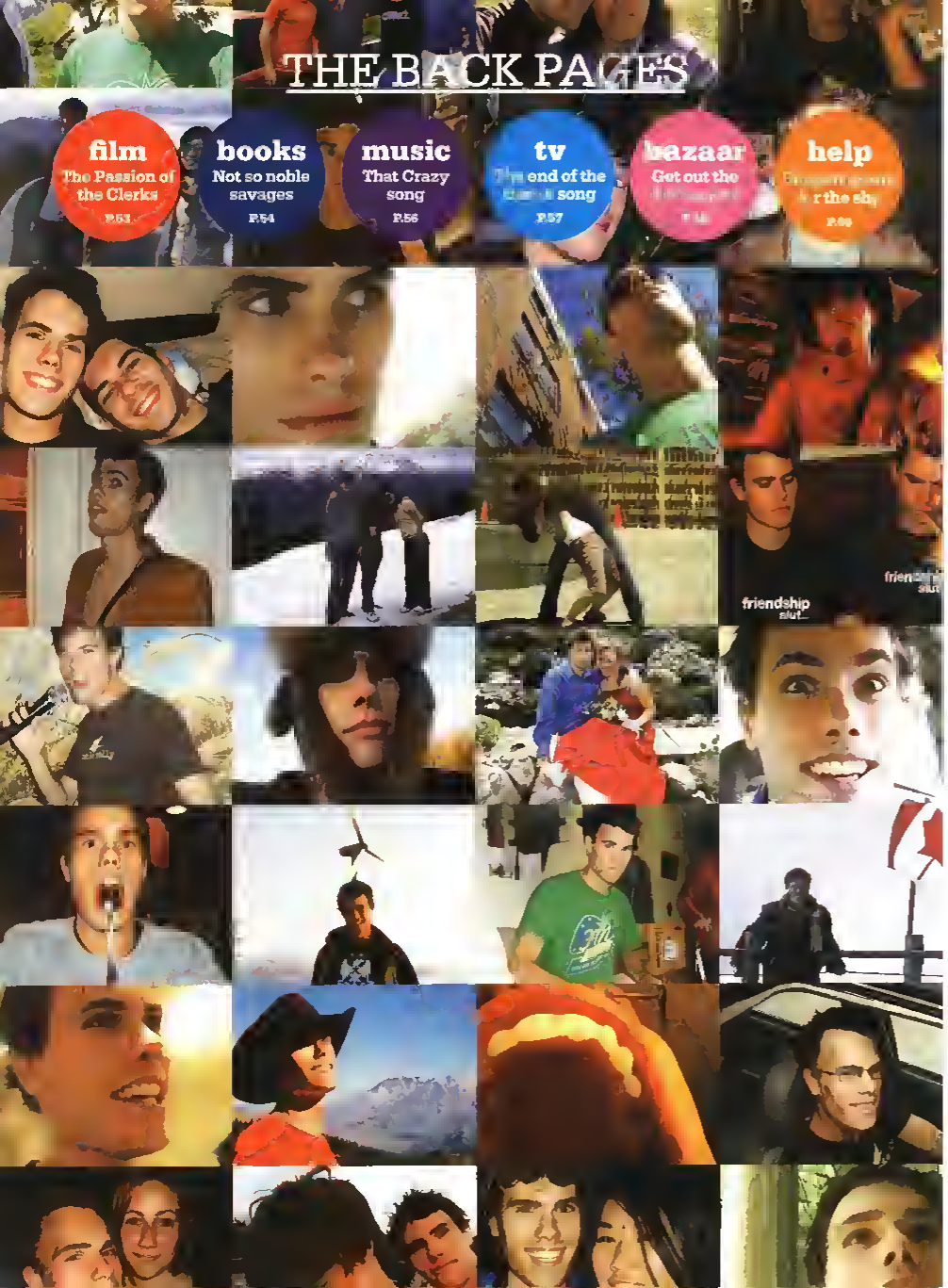
★ SEX AND SOCCER DON'T MIX

A German sex shop chain made headlines when it was announced that they were marketing a David B dildo (and other devices with similar references to soccer stars). Not surprisingly, the sex toys weren't officially endorsed by the English captain or any other player. The company dropped the names when the threat of a lawsuit was mentioned.

The tourney attracted 40,000 prostitutes from all over Europe (in addition to the 400,000 registered in Germany). As well, a four-storey brothel, with a pool and a movie theatre, opened in Berlin last month. But it turned out that most of the fans were more interested in the soccer action. The result: bored sex workers. M

'I WATCHED THE GAME IN MY UNDERPANTS. FORTUNATELY, I HAD QUITE A LONG T-SHIRT.'

JAVIER TORRES/AFP/GETTY IMAGES (1) ENRIQUE MARCARIAN/REUTERS (2) SHAUN BOTTERILL/GETTY IMAGES (3) PAWEL KOPCZYNSKI/REUTERS (4) MIKE EGERTON/AP (5) FOTOSPORTS (6) PAULO WHITAKER/REUTERS (7)



Look at us. Suddenly we're all celebrities.

web

TRIBUTE FILMS. DNA PORTRAITS. THEIR VERY OWN ENTOURAGE. IT TAKES THE VERY LATEST VANITY PRODUCTS TO MAKE THE NEW NARCISSISTS FEEL IMPORTANT.

BY JOHN INTINI

Michael Tyas's Hollywood experiment lasted eight long months. "I was an intern on a reality TV show in L.A., and was hating it with a passion because it wasn't reality," says Tyas, who prefers not to reveal the name of the show. "I logged all of the original footage—about 500 hours—so I saw the real story, and then I saw the fantasy story they made out of it." So the 23 year old freelance photographer, now back in his parent's Shelburne, Ont., home, did what thousands from his generation have done: he turned the camera on himself.

Tyas began a vlog—an online video diary of his life. "I always thought it would be cool to get my face in front of hundreds of people." He's unapologetic about building a site around his remarkably ordinary existence—his first post was a six-minute tour of his filthy L.A. apartment; more recently he's included a clip of his trip to the Ontario Science Centre, and another just hanging out at a friend's apartment. "I make narcissism look good," says Tyas, who has made $8 49 in ad sales on his site since April 2005. "It's a very positive thing to like yourself and think you're marketable enough to put your face out there."

His confidence, cultural observers point out, is not an anomaly. "This is the Barney Generation," says Alison Hearn, an assistant professor of information and media studies at the University of Western Ontario. "These kids have grown up in a world in which they've constantly been told they're special." This age of narcissism has spawned an industry that's all about you and me. And now, a few years into the Me Media revolution, an array of professional grade vanity products and services have cropped up to meet the new narcissists' needs. "They're all ways of defining yourself," says Hearn. "Creating an image of yourself and then falling in love with it."



TYAS (left) is unapologetic about posting photos of his remarkably ordinary life

Anyone interested in a bit of immortality? No problem. For a fee ranging from $15,000 to $80,000, London, Eng.-based eDv, which bills itself as the "personal motion picture company," gets professional filmmakers to sort through your old home videos, conduct and tape interviews with your family, and edit together a high-quality biography. If that seems too commercial or too much work, try buying your way into the pages of a book by a favourite author. This is often done through charity auctions. Last September, John Grisham, Dave Eggers and Stephen King put the names of upcoming characters on the block (a Florida woman paid US$25,100 for the right to put her brother's name to a character in King's new book).

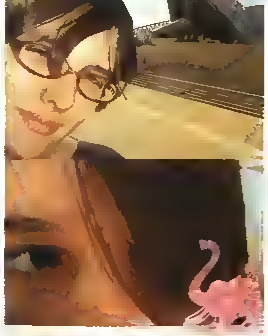
There are many other ways of making yourself a star. One website, based in the Netherlands, allows users to create their own soap opera by posting messages, pictures and video from their own lives. While it doesn't much resemble your typical mid-afternoon guilty pleasure, that hasn't stopped people from posting and visitors from checking in and voting for their favourites. The highest ranking "stars" can win prizes, including a celebrity magazine feature (the site is run by a magazine publisher). Then there's Playstation 2's EyeToy—a digital camera that literally places gamers within a video game. In *Kung Fu*, users can show off their martial arts skills by taking on the bad guys with their very own digitized hands and feet.

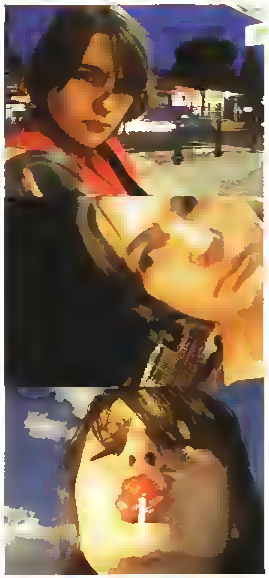
Technology is in part to blame. It's helped us meet these needs—and create them. The affordability of digital cameras, for instance, has sparked a surge in the popularity of self-portraits. Most young people are perfectly comfortable taking their own pictures—a key part of their Internet egos on MySpace and the like. Some change their photo almost every day. "It's an image economy," says Hearn. "It's all about branding yourself."

Some, like Erica Morgan, have devoted entire websites to self-portraiture—a form in which one can be a star on *both* sides of the camera. Since February 2003, Morgan, who was born in South Carolina and now lives in Sydney, Australia, takes a photo of herself every day and posts it on her site (1,111 at last count). "At first I was a little concerned about obsessive strangers," says the 27 year old photographer. "And a little self-conscious about pulling out my camera and turning it in my direction." Apparently, she got over it.

These days—again thanks to technology—you can pretty much get your likeness plastered on anything. This business niche

MY TWINN dolls (top), DNA and fingerprint portraits, Playstation 2's EyeToy





hearkens back to those booths at shopping malls that would print your picture on a coffee mug or a T-shirt. By contemporary standards, that old personalized fare appears like cave art. Today, fond parents can get a replica doll made of their children for US$139. To create a 23-inch Mini Me, parents can go on *mytwinn.com* and build the doll themselves, or send in a photo of junior and have the toy specialists do the legwork. The doll is an exact likeness, freckles and birthmarks are hand-painted at no additional cost. A couple of years ago, a California-based firm started selling personalized confetti—your digital images were turned into tiny paper scraps. Before they shut down, the company had sold 30,000 bags—starting at US$17 each—to people who wanted to be the life of the party.

ERICA MORGAN (left), who is 27, posts a photo of herself every day on her website

Our look-at-me industry has even found its way into the art world. Send about $400 and a saliva sample to Ottawa-based DNA 11, and you'll receive an 18 x 24-inch portrait (available in one of eight colours) of your very own personal genetic code. "Before we started, we thought that everyone with a big ego would want one of these hanging in their offices—and we have lots of CEOs, power brokers, investment brokers and venture capitalists that own our artwork," says co-founder Adrian Salamunovic, whose company has shipped art to 30 countries and sold more than 1,000 prints since last July. "But moms and grandmas have done it too. For most, ego doesn't play a factor." In celebration of its one-year anniversary, the company is unveiling this week a new twist on the original fingerprint portraits. "What we do is not in your face narcissistic—like say an oil painting of my face over the fireplace," says Salamunovic, 30. "This is highly personal art—it's one of one. And you're a collaborator."

BY CONTEMPORARY STANDARDS, PRINTING YOUR PHOTO ON A COFFEE MUG APPEARS LIKE CAVE ART. PEOPLE CAN NOW HIRE AN ENTOURAGE—COMPLETE WITH BODYGUARD, FAUX-FRIENDS AND PAPARAZZI PHOTOGRAPHERS—TO GREET THEM CLIMBING OUT OF A LIMO AT THE HOTTEST CLUB

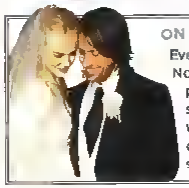
The proliferation of personalized services may just be a logical next step for a society in which everything—from weddings to funerals—is hyper-personalized. For several years now, thanks in large part to the reality TV craze, we've been told that we can be stars. Now we're starting to act like it. At the extreme end of the spectrum, people, desperate for the rock-star treatment, can hire an entourage—complete with a bodyguard, faux friends and paparazzi photographers to greet them climbing out of a limo at the hottest club.

An effect of all this is the elevation of the completely ordinary. The clearest model may be YouTube, the video-sharing website with the narcissistic "Broadcast Yourself" tagline, which is getting 70 million video views a day. YouTube has hundreds of thousands of clips from rock concerts and old TV shows, but the very random—and sometimes humorous—videos of regular people doing boring stuff has also played an integral role in the site's success. "We're not just finding ways to share our very mundane lives, we're also tuning in to watch other people's. One recent trend involved users posting videos of themselves watching other youtubers watching YouTube."

Or consider the six-month-old vlog of Dan O'Rourke, a provincial government policy worker in Halifax, who says that making himself the star is simply a product of necessity. "I'm the only actor I can afford," says the 26-year-old, who spends as many as 10 hours a week working on his vlog. "I just do things that I think will turn out interesting without a target audience in mind." Road trips, he says, usually make for the best posts, but, much to his own surprise, his most popular clip so far—which has attracted more than 1,000 views—was a 30-second spot during which he pours out a container of spoiled chocolate milk.

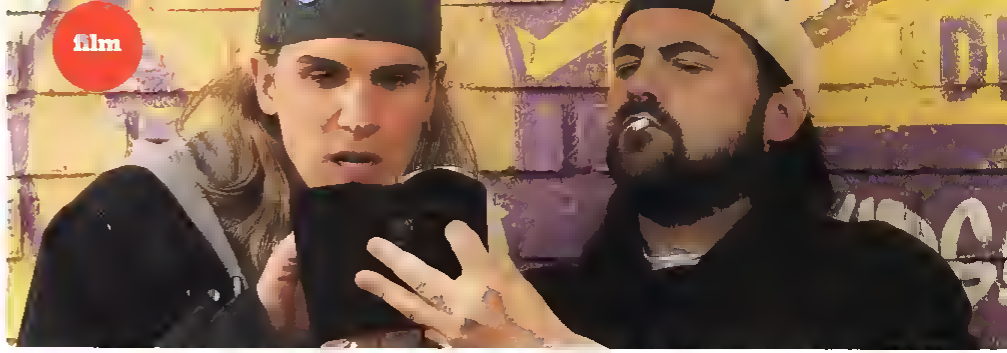
People seem to be going to greater heights in the pursuit of real reality—and they aren't exactly succeeding. "Authenticity is a very hazy construct," says Marc Ouellette, who teaches English and cultural studies at McMaster University. "In the race for distinction, everyone ends up ultimately looking the same." And often, he suggests, we end up using the modes of mainstream and celebrity culture, even when we think we're being original. "I'd like to think that it's totally their voice, but I don't," he says. "There are so many forces. It's not purely narcissistic since it's almost always attached to some pre-existing cultural and celebrity icon."

In fact, more than narcissism, Ouellette believes many of us today suffer from solipsism—the inability to recognize the existence of another viewpoint. "Solipsism is supposed to end by mid-adolescence, but I don't think it's disappearing at the same stage in the cognitive process that it used to," he says. "Most people get to a point in their lives when they recognize that others have a viewpoint that is just as valid as their own. With adolescence starting earlier and ending later, some never get to that stage. It ultimately comes down to always thinking, 'what's in it for me.'" M



ON THE WEB BETTING ON MARRIAGE STALE DATES

Ever been to a wedding and muttered, "This marriage won't last"? Now you can vote at *www.weddingbetting.com*. Mean-spirited punters have submitted 500 wedding announcements to the site, which allows people to vote for how long a new marriage will survive. Besides ordinary couples, surfers can vote on the outcome of the nuptials of Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban, who so far have received an 85 per cent chance of divorce.



As stoner savants Jey and Silent Bob, Mewes (left) and Smith return in a sequel that sends up Jesus freaks and *The Lord of the Rings*

The Gospel According to Kevin

America's slacker king of indie cool launches Clerks II—and asks to be an honorary Canuck

BY BRIAN D. JOHNSON

Kevin Smith hit the Big Time, and the bottom, all at once. In 2004, he directed Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez (remember Bennifer?) in *Jersey Girl*, a Hollywood flop. He'd come a long way from *Clerks*, the black-and-white film that launched his career a decade earlier. And now the 35-year-old director has done the sensible, grown-up thing: he's made a sequel. *Clerks II*, which opens next week, cost 182 times more than the original, and it's in colour. But the budget is still a paltry US$5 million. And Smith's street cred seems safe. When *Clerks II* premiered in Cannes last May, he took the stage in a tuxedo with shorts, sneakers and no socks. "I misplaced my pants," he said, confessing the tux made him feel "a little gay." Puncturing French protocol by declaring it was a "massive f---ing honour" to be in Cannes, he introduced a wildly profane yet sweet romantic comedy that pokes fun at *The Lord of the Rings*, Jesus freaks, homophobia and middle class manners—culminating with a donkey scene that suggests bestiality may be Hollywood's final frontier.

Smith is a living cliché of indie success. In 1994, after dropping out of film school, he wrote and directed *Clerks* for US$27,000—drawing on his tuition refund, parents' generosity, credit cards, and the sale of his comic book collection. He shot it by night in the same Quick Stop mini-mart where he worked in New Jersey. The slacker comedy became a cult hit. And its stoner savants, Jay and Silent Bob (played by Jason Mewes and the director), became franchise fixtures in films such as *Mall Rats*, *Chasing Amy* and *Dogma*.

Smith, who stirred religious controversy with *Dogma*, was going to call his sequel *The Passion of the Clerks*. "But it's a one-note joke," he says, on the phone from his home in Los Angeles. "We wound up going for the undersell. I believe in lowering the bar. I like to keep as close to the floor as possible." He adds that he's still "fairly" Roman Catholic—"I believe in heaven and hell." But he also accepts abortion and gay marriage, "the kind of stuff they kick you out of the club for."

Clerks II reunites Brian O'Halloran and Jeff Anderson as Dante and Randal, who find jobs at a burger joint after the Quick Stop burns down. Dante is finally facing adulthood with a domineering fiancée (Smith's wife, Jennifer Schwalbach). But he holds a secret flame for the restaurant's manager, Becky, played by a sensational Rosario Dawson (*Sin City*). Smith had originally cast his wife as Becky. But executive producer Harvey Weinstein told him, "You got to give me a name, someone we can put on the poster." The director says his wife didn't mind being demoted to the role of the bitchy fiancée—"Jen would be the first to say she's not an actress." They first met when she interviewed him as a journalist for *USA Today*. Now you can read about their marriage in his blog, "My Boring Ass Life." In a recent entry, he mounts an eloquent defence of nose-picking and lays out the gentlemanly etiquette of anal sex.

Like a Jersey Gen X answer to Woody Allen, Smith is a schlump with an effortless knack for converting his life into comedy. But behind the slacker pose of the punk auteur is a shrewd showman. He was one of the first filmmakers to exploit the Internet. And in an inspired bit of marketing, fans going to *Clerks II* for a second time can download his DVD-style commentary as a podcast and listen to it in the theatre, synched with the movie. "Not a lot of filmmakers have an audience who would be into that," he says. "Most people aren't like, 'Let's go watch *Pirates of the Caribbean. Dead Man's Chest* with a commentary track.' Our audience is so groomed on our DVDs, it's natural."

Smith's work is an ongoing satirical commentary, and in that sense it's akin to Canadian humour. "My ties to Canada are deep and long," says the director, who's a huge fan of CTV's *Degrassi: The Next Generation* and appeared in three episodes as Silent Bob. "I've always been dialed into Canadian culture, whether it's *Degrassi* or Glassette peanuts, or Kids in the Hall. I often feel like Kal-El [Superman], the adopted son sent to Canada from Planet America." Smith wants to direct a *Degrassi* episode, but public funding rules require him to be Canadian. "I'd take out dual citizenship," he says, "if they'd give it to me for nothing, like an honorary degree." M

ON THE WEB *For a Q&A with Kevin Smith, plus video from the Cannes film fest, visit* www.macleans.ca/kevinsmith



WHO WE'RE STALKING | NICOLE RICHIE

Since dumping fiancé DJ AM, the 24-year-old starlet has been out on dinner dates with 53-year-old actor Jeff Goldblum. Sure he's twice her age (and sure, he once drooled litres of insect saliva in David Cronenberg's *The Fly*). But Goldblum is enjoying pride of place in Richie's nightlife because, Richie says, she's had a crush on the old guy since she was 13. Previously she's reportedly dated 42-year-old Matt Dillon. What is it about middle-aged men?



THE IROQUOIS 'took captives home to torture them before death,' but were defeated by Samuel de Champlain and the Algonquins



IN DISNEY'S *Pocahontas*, John Smith and his men brought devastation—until he learned to 'paint with all the colours of the wind'

Before the white man came? War.

We've deluded ourselves into believing in the myth of the noble and peaceful primitive

BY MARK STEYN

Nicholas Wade's *Before The Dawn* is one of those books full of eye-catching details. For example, did you know the Inuit have the largest brains of any modern humans? Something to do with the cold climate. Presumably, if this global warming hooey ever takes off, their brains will be shrinking with the ice caps.

But the passage that really stopped me short was this:

"Both Keeley and LeBlanc believe that for a variety of reasons anthropologists and their fellow archaeologists have seriously underreported the prevalence of warfare among primitive societies... 'I realized that archaeologists of the postwar period had artificially "pacified the past" and shared a pervasive bias against the possibility of prehistoric warfare,' says Keeley."

That's Lawrence Keeley, a professor at the University of Illinois. And the phrase that stuck was that bit about artificially pacifying the past. We've grown used to the biases of popular culture. If a British officer meets a native—African, Indian, whatever—in any movie, play or novel of the last 30 years, the Englishman will be a sneering supercilious sadist and the native will be a dignified man of peace in perfect harmony with his environment in whose tribal language there is not even a word for "war" or "killing" or "weapons of mass destruction." A few years ago, I asked Tim Rice, who'd just written the lyrics for Disney's *Aladdin* and *The Lion King*, why he wasn't doing *Pocahontas*. "Well, the minute they mentioned it," he said, "I knew the Brits would be the bad guys. I felt it was my patriotic duty to decline." Sure enough, when the film came out, John Smith and his men were the bringers of environmental devastation to the New World. "They prowl the earth like ravenous wolves," warns the medicine man, whereas Chief Powhatan wants everyone to be "guided to a place of peace." Fortunately, Captain Smith comes to learn from Pocahontas how to "paint with all the colours of the wind."

In reality, Pocahontas's fellow Algonquin Indians were preyed on by the Iroquois, "who took captives home to torture them before death," observes Nicholas Wade en passant. The Iroquois? Surely not. Only a year or two back, the ethnic grievance lobby managed to persuade Congress to pass a resolution that the United States Constitution was modelled on the principles of the Iroquois Confederation—which would have been news to the dead white males who wrote it. With Disney movies, one assumes it's just the modishness of showbiz ignoramuses and whatever multiculti theorists they've put on the payroll as consultants. But professor Keeley and Steven LeBlanc of Harvard disclose almost as an aside that, in fact, their scientific colleagues were equally invested in the notion of the noble primitive living in peace with nature and his fellow man, even though no such creature appears to have existed. "Most archaeologists," says LeBlanc, "ignored the fortifications around Mayan cities and viewed the Mayan elite as peaceful priests. But over the last 20 years Mayan records have been deciphered. Contrary to archaeologists' wishful thinking, they show the allegedly peaceful elite was heavily into war, conquest and the sanguinary sacrifice of beaten opponents." The large number of copper and bronze axes found in Late Neolithic and Bronze Age burials were held to be not battle axes but a form of money."

And on, and on. Do you remember that fabulously preserved 5,000-year-old man they found in a glacier in 1991? He had one of those copper axes the experts assured us were an early unit of currency. Unfortunately for this theory, he had it hafted in a manner that suggested he wasn't asking, "Can you break a twenty?" "He also had with him," notes professor Keeley, "a dagger, a bow, and some arrows, presumably these were his small change." Nonetheless, anthropologists concluded that he was a shepherd who had fallen asleep and frozen peacefully to death in a snowstorm. Then the X-ray results came back and showed he had an arrowhead in him.

Not for the first time, the experts turn out to be playing what children call "Opposite Land." There's more truth in Cole Porter's couplet from *Find Me A Primitive Man*:

I don't mean the kind that belongs to a club
But the kind that has a club that belongs to him.



CORBIS

FINALLY A BOOK ABOUT...COURT PERFUMERS

Whether prescribing cake or getting her head chopped off, Marie-Antoinette always smelled great, thanks to Jean-Louis Fargeon, a man of humble origins who, although a republican at heart, rose to be France's court perfumer. In *A Scented Palace, The Secret Life of Marie-Antoinette's Perfumer*, Elisabeth de Feydeau unearths a secret recipe for the queen's personal scent, Parfum du Trianon, which has been revived by perfume maker Francis Kurkdjian.

DISNEY

Although Porter was the kind that belongs to a club, the second line accurately conveys his own taste in men. He'd have been very annoyed if Mister Primitive had turned out to be some mellow colours of your-windness hippy-dippy granola-cruncher.

Lawrence Keeley calculates that 87 per cent of primitive societies were at war more than once per year, and some 65 per cent of them were fighting continuously. "Had the same casualty rate been suffered by the population of the twentieth century," writes Wade, "its war deaths would have totaled two billion people." Two billion! In other words, we're the aberration: after 50,000 years of continuous human slaughter, you, me, Bush, Cheney, Blair, Harper, Rummy, Condi, we're the nancy-boy peacenik crowd. "The common impression that primitive peoples, by comparison, were peaceful and their occasional fighting of no serious consequence is incorrect. Warfare between pre-state societies was incessant, merciless, and conducted with the general purpose, often achieved, of annihilating the opponent."

Why then, against all the evidence, do we venerate the primitive? And to the point of pretending a bunch of torturing marauders devised the separation of powers in the U.S. Constitution. We do it for the same reason we indulge behaviour like that at Caledonia, Ont. We want to believe that the yard, the cul-de-sac, the morning commute, the mall are merely the bland veneer of our lives, and that underneath we are still that noble primitive living in harmony with the great spirits of the forest and the mountain. The reality is that "civilization"—Greco-Roman-Judeo-Christian—worked very hard to stamp out the primitive within us, and for good reason.

I was interested to read Wade's book after a month in which men raised in suburban Ontario were charged with a terrorist plot that included plans to behead the Prime Minister, and the actual heads of three decapitated police officers were found in the Tijuana River. The Mexican drug gangs weren't Muslim last time I checked, but evidently decapitation isn't just for jihadists anymore: if you want to get ahead, get a head. A couple of years back, I came across a column in *The East African* by Charles Onyango-Obbo musing on the return of cannibalism to the Dark Continent. Ugandan-backed rebels in the Congo (four million dead but, as they haven't found a way to pin it on Bush, nobody cares) had been making victims' relatives eat the body parts of their loved ones. You'll recall that, when Samuel Doe was toppled as Liberia's leader, he was served a last meal of his own ears. His killers kept his genitals for themselves, under the belief that if you eat a man's penis you acquire his powers. One swallow doesn't make a summer, of course, but I wonder sometimes if we're not heading toward a long night of re-primitivization. In his shrewd book *Civilization And Its Enemies*, Lee Harris writes:

"Forgetfulness occurs when those who have been long inured to civilized order can no longer remember a time in which they had to wonder whether their crops would grow to maturity without being stolen or their children sold into slavery by a victorious foe... That, before 9/11, was what had happened to us. The very concept of the enemy had been banished from our moral and political vocabulary."

It's worse than Harris thinks. We're not merely "forgetful." We've constructed a fantasy past in which primitive societies lived in peace and security with nary a fear that their crops would be stolen or their children enslaved. War has been the natural condition of mankind for thousands of years, and our civilization is a very fragile exception to that. What does it say about us that so many of our elites believe exactly the opposite—that we are a monstrous violent rupture with our primitive pacifist ancestors? It's never a good idea to put reality up for grabs. You can bet your highest denomination axe on that. M

MACLEAN'S

BESTSELLERS

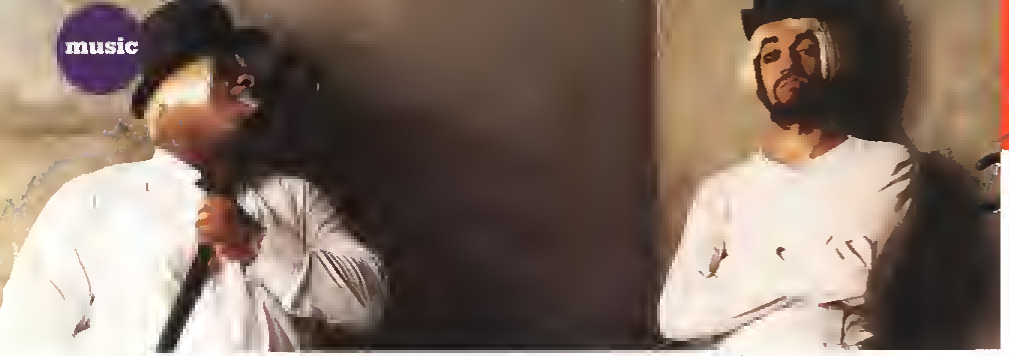
COMPILED BY BRIAN BETHUNE

Fiction

		LAST WEEK (WEEKS ON LIST)
1	SUITE FRANÇAISE by Irène Némirovsky	1 (13)
2	JPOD by Douglas Coupland	3 (8)
3	TERRORIST by John Updike	4 (4)
4	PIECE OF MY HEART by Peter Robinson	8 (8)
5	THE FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT by Alan Furst	(1)
6	THE BIRTH HOUSE by Ami McKay	6 (17)
7	THEFT by Peter Carey	7 (6)
8	TWELVE SHARP by Janet Evanovich	5 (2)
9	DIGGING TO AMERICA by Anne Tyler	10 (2)
10	BOOK OF LONGING by Leonard Cohen	9 (10)

Non-fiction

1	HEAT by Bill Buford	8 (2)
2	STUMBLING ON HAPPINESS by Daniel Gilbert	6 (2)
3	THE WEATHER MAKERS by Tim Flannery	4 (18)
4	THE BATTLE OF THE SOMME by Martin Gilbert	5 (2)
5	THE ISLAND OF SEVEN CITIES by Paul Chiasson	2 (8)
6	DISPATCHES FROM THE EDGE by Anderson Cooper	3 (5)
7	MARLEY & ME by John Grogan	1 (22)
8	THE BRONFMANS by Nicholas Faith	(1)
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GNARLS BARKLEY'S Cee-Lo Green and Brian 'Danger Mouse' Burton 'There's a reverence type of feeling I get,' says Green

There's nothing selling like Crazy

Paris Hilton, Nelly Furtado, the Kooks—they're all mad for this summer's hottest song

BY SHANDA DEZIEL • No self-respecting music fan wants their new favourite song to be associated with Paris Hilton. That's why it was a little unsettling when it was reported the heiress was holding off on releasing her debut CD so she could go back into the studio and record a cover of the hip song du jour, *Crazy*, by Gnarls Barkley. While the thought of Hilton massacring such a catchy soulful track infuriates some, at least one member of Gnarls Barkley isn't all that worked up. "I think it's funny," says singer Cee Lo Green, 31. "It's adorable to me, it's cute. You don't necessarily know Paris Hilton—you just think you do. She's a real person under all the splash and glamour—and it's a real song. I'm not surprised she's able to feel it. I don't think she's a robot behind closed doors."

That said, Green and his Gnarls Barkley partner, Brian Burton (a.k.a. DJ Danger Mouse), did give Warner—Hilton's record label, and theirs—"an indication" that they didn't want *Crazy* to end up on her CD. After all, everyone and their dog is having their way with the song. *Crazy* was initially released in Britain back in April—as the first single off the Gnarls Barkley album, *St. Elsewhere*. The electro psychedelic hip-hop soul song debuted at No. 1 and stayed there for nine weeks—the first single to reach No. 1 through download sales alone. Almost immediately, cover versions started popping up on the Internet. British indie band the Kooks, U.S. folksinger Ray LaMontagne, and Canadian songbird Nelly Furtado all approached it acoustically. Rock band the Twilight Singers grunged it up, and U.K. singer Terri Walker went for a jazz vibe.

Even with all the covers floating around, it's the original that will likely be heard blasting from cars, remixed in clubs and playing in trendy restaurants all summer long. In Canada, the Gnarls Barkley CD has gone platinum, and *Crazy* is No. 1 on radio charts. Billboard Hot 100 in the U.S. lists *Crazy* at No. 3 and rising, while the album is No. 1 on its tastemakers chart and electronic album chart. Meanwhile, over in the U.K., the hysteria has died down. After *Crazy* commanded the charts and saturated the airwaves for nearly three months, the band made the decision to delete the single, making it unavailable for online purchase. "I just got the feeling that it was getting to be played a lot," says Burton, 28, "maybe even overplayed. I didn't want people who originally liked it to get sick of it. People at the radio stations don't care what playing a song every hour is going to do to the song or to the people."

True enough, the recklessness with which OutKast's *Hey Ya!* was played two summers ago has scarred us all. And no one is more aware of that than Green, a good friend and sometime collaborator with fellow Atlantans OutKast. "We never talked about what happened with it," says Green, referring to *Hey Ya!*'s mainstream popularity. "But I know that Andre [of OutKast] wouldn't do it live, he wouldn't tour with it." OutKast is by no means a one-hit wonder, but a big song can sour a career. Andre 3000 will forever be the guy in the green pants shaking it like a Polaroid picture.

Already Green, who's had a solo career and been part of the rap group Goodie Mob, has noticed that people treat him differently post *Crazy*. "There's this reverence type of feeling that I get from people, like they don't know if I can be spoken to. It puts you in an awkward place—you want your music to be received as well as possible, but then again I don't necessarily want a wall built around me."

He's happiest on stage and is quite open to performing *Crazy* live, although the star of the show is the band's costumer, who dresses the duo and their backing musicians according to a different theme for each performance. At the MTV Movie Awards they were characters from *Star Wars*, and at the Coachella music festival they donned *Wizard of Oz* costumes—Green was the Cowardly Lion, Burton (who works the turntables and keyboards) was the Tin Man, the backup singers looked like Dorothy, and there were flying monkeys on violin and cello.

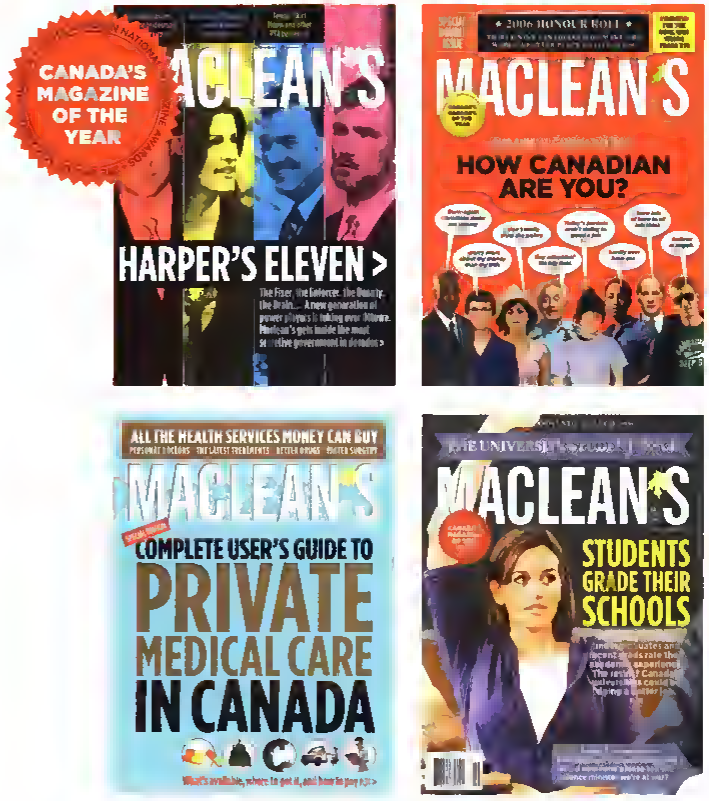
Between the hit song and the colourful live show, Gnarls Barkley should have no trouble pulling in crowds on their North American tour this summer (including two dates in Toronto). The next single, *Smiley Faces*, lands in Britain this month and then works its way over here. While Green boasts that people are already calling it "an inevitable hit," Burton's more subdued. "It won't be as big as *Crazy*." We'll have to wait and see what Paris Hilton says about that. M



SONIC YOUTH...HAS SOMETHING TO SAY

"I ripped yr heart out from yr chest / Replaced it with a grenade blast / Firefighters hose me down / I don't care I'll burn out anyhow / It's 4 alarm girl nothing to see / Hear the sirens come for me / You dosed my soul with gasoline / You flicked a match into my brain / I remember you so cold as ice / Now flames are licking at yr feet / Sirens come to put me out of misery / You wave yr torch into my eyes..."—from *Rather Ripped*

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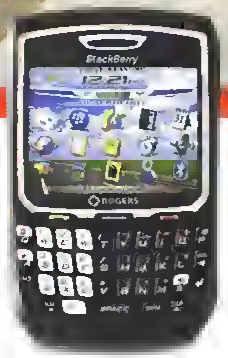
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THE LYRICS for some popular TV tunes even explained what the show was about, as with the theme from *Gilligan's Island*

Join us here each week my friend

Hardly any TV shows now have a theme song, but where's the nostalgia in electronic beeps?

BY JAIME J. WEINMAN • Name your favourite current television show. Now try to remember that show's theme music. These days, there's a very good chance that even a show that's top notch in every other department will have no memorable theme music—or no theme music at all.

Many viewers grew up expecting TV shows to have long title sequences with instantly catchy, memorable music that would define the whole show. Sometimes the music even sported lyrics explaining what the show was about, as with the title songs of *Gilligan's Island* or *The Dukes of Hazzard*. But many of today's hit shows get on with the action without stopping for a musical moment. *Lost* throws its title card on the screen without any real theme music, while *24* makes do with just a few seconds of beeping.

Jon Burlingame, author of the book *TV's Biggest Hits: The Story of Television Themes from "Dragnet" to "Friends"*, laments the decline of the TV theme song. He places a lot of the blame on the fact that the opening credits, where theme songs are usually heard, are too short for a complete theme. "Network executives are scared to death that someone will change the channel during the opening credits, which means that most TV themes are only 10 seconds long or less," he says.

Even if today's producers wanted to have a longer title sequence, though, they probably wouldn't have time for it. Commercial TV shows today are several minutes shorter than they used to be, and getting shorter, there simply isn't time to tell a story and still devote one or two minutes to a theme song. And since networks now run promotional spots over the end credits of their shows—which means that the end credits music is never heard until a show gets released on DVD—there is no place left for a composer to put an extended piece of music.

But a minute or so spent on a catchy theme tune can make a difference. It can increase the show's appeal not just at the time, but for all time. The recent movie *Mission: Impossible 3* still used the rhythmically tricky tune written for the original show by Lalo Schifrin, a theme that has helped turn a simple adventure show into a long-lasting franchise.

But many producers today don't necessarily want a new theme tune, the in thing is to license an already existing song. Instead of commissioning a theme song for the show *CSI*, producer Jerry Bruckheimer licensed *Who Are You* by the Who. "I'm angry at shows like the *CSI* shows," Burlingame says. "I just don't think those songs add anything to the experience." It used to be that an original song would be written for a show and then become a hit, that's what happened a decade ago with the theme song of *Friends*. Now producers don't want to go to all the time and trouble of creating one.

The producers who do want original music frequently don't want to spend much money recording it. The way a TV theme is orchestrated is often as important as the tune itself, think of *The Rockford Files* (scored by Mike Post and Pete Carpenter) and its wailing harmonica. But most shows today don't have a music budget that allows for real musical instruments, instead, nearly all current TV shows use electronically generated music, which sounds like a bad imitation of a real orchestra. Burlingame thinks that while computerized music can sometimes be effective, it usually defeats the purpose of television music. "Most electronic music is simply cold—and the reason for having music in shows is to create an emotional feeling."

Some shows here and there have managed to come up with really distinctive-sounding theme songs. CTV's *Corner Gas* has a theme that sums up the laid-back rural setting of the show; co-composer Craig Northey says it was supposed to sound "like you could listen to it while you're driving across the prairie, and clap your hands on the steering wheel." But more typical these days is something like the main title theme for *House*, which isn't recognizable as a theme at all—just 30 seconds' worth of a pulsating electronic beat.

It seems likely that TV running times will go on getting shorter, and music budgets will go on getting smaller. So what Burlingame calls "tunes that entered our consciousness" may become even rarer than they are now. But without a strong theme tune, it can be hard for a show to establish a strong identity that lasts beyond its original network run. As Peter Scolari said in an episode of *Newhart*, "I can't enjoy a show unless it has a catchy theme song that explains the premise." M

PHOTO BY LAMBERT/GETTY IMAGES TV INSET EVERETT COLLECTION



WORLD CUP AND GAME SHOWS...ACCORDING TO TV

While it's known that Americans don't watch soccer, just how little they care came up in the audience numbers. Every World Cup game aired on ESPN failed to make the numbers attracted by *Gameshow Marathon* on CBS, in which contestants participate in old TV game-show formats. Last week, two obscure stars competed in a revival of *Family Feud*, drawing 6.8 million viewers, more than triple the average of 2.3 million for each World Cup game.



GIDDY-UP! New fall/winter shoes by (left to right) Marc Jacobs, Chloe, Balenciaga, Chloe, Miu Miu, Balenciaga, and Chloe.

Fall's Frankenstein-esque footwear

Skinny stilettos are about to be trampled by provocative seven-inch cloven hoof heels

BY ANNE KINGSTON • With a thud—and a lascivious wink for those in on the joke—fall footwear is galumphing into stores. Clunky, chunky and vertiginous, these are shoes and boots that elevate, then ground with a gravitational yank. Nicolas Ghesquière of Balenciaga leads the brigade with his fashion-forward (read: ugly) collection that includes US$1,495 leather and suede "harness boots" with three-inch platform soles and seven-inch cloven hoof heels. Pierre Hardy references disco *and* Neil Armstrong with his shiny silver and black suede moon boots that lift the wearer almost a half-foot above the ground. Prada is selling heavy, studded T-strap platforms, Miu Miu's patent leather Mary Janes atop a rococo gilt gold wedge have prompted waiting lists. Chloe offers variations on a high wood heeled theme. Marc Jacobs, Louis Vuitton and Proenza Schouler are all showing hefty heels. Which means it's only time before the trickle-down to Aldo effect kicks in.

Once again, fashion's ever-shifting pendulum ushers in the shock of the newly stylish—this time with a 180 degree movement from skinny, sculptural stilettos and demure ballet flats. In its July issue, *Vogue* justifies Frankenstein-esque footwear as a means of providing necessary (and leg slimming!) anchorage for fall's voluminous silhouettes—the poof skirts, bell-curved opera coats and sack dresses that telegraph "a new definition of femininity, freed from the ladylike."

Such logic might find traction with the few who still regard shoes as mere accessories—decorative covering intended to keep feet dry. But it won't fly with those who view female footwear as a cultural construct, symbolic of power, class and sexuality—nothing less than the material manifestation of the id in a post-Freudian world.

"These shoes might augment fashion but you can't ignore their social significance," says Elizabeth Semmelhack, the curator of Toronto's Bata Shoe Museum. And that, no surprise, is linked to erotic currency. "High platforms and high heels are found in all fetish shoes," she explains. But the new offerings convey "a more nuanced, specific connection to 'pony-girl fetish,'" she says, referring to women who kit themselves up for sexual play like horses, complete with bit, harness and precarious platform shoes that lend the legan equine curve and substitute for a hoof.

Semmelhack observes that the new shoes—especially Ghesquere's—are being shown on models wearing equestrian gear. "The horse and rider have been conflated," she says. "So what you have is conflicting ideas of power and submission, of self and presenting one self as an object of desire." Semmelhack is well versed in complex shoe semiotics. In "A Delicate Balance: Women, Power and High Heels," she writes that the high heel is "one of those luxuries seen as confirming women's natural proclivity toward foolish adornment."

The essay will be published this September in *Shoes: A History from Sandals to Sneakers*, edited by Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil. Riello, an economic historian at the London School of Economics and the author of *A Foot in the Past: Consumers, Producers, and Footwear in the Long Eighteenth Century*, recently returned from Italy, where he says he saw platform shoes everywhere. He notes that the style harks back to the *chopine*, an elevated shoe worn by European women between the 14th and 17th centuries. Rising as high as 20 inches, it was popular with Venetian women as it lifted them literally above the muck and provided greater public stature. Yet while viewed as symbols of heightened female power, *chopines* hobbled women, forcing them to travel with a companion or servant who provided support. Prostitutes favoured the highest platform, while aristocrats preferred five-inch platforms as a mark of their moral superiority—and modesty.

For the unescorted modern woman, platforms with inflexible soles can be more hazardous than stilettos. Elisabeth Hibbert, an Oakville, Ont., chiropodist, rhymes off the perils, which include inability to balance, lateral ankle sprains, lack of shock absorption leading to bone damage, and an "apropulsive gait" that apparently causes no end of foot agony. "The higher you go, the more dangerous it is," she warns.

But danger is precisely what Ghesquière's groupies crave. "One of the things fashion offers is the excitement of risk," says Semmelhack. "It's never about practicality, it's almost always about being outrageous." And stilettos, as stale as *Sex and the City* reruns, no longer provide that. "Stilettos have become mainstream and slightly cheesy," Riello says. "I see why designers would want to move away."

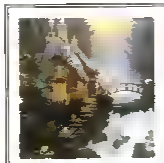
Then, of course, there's the economic imperative. The relentless focus on footwear is consistent with what Riello calls "the fragmentation of 20th-century fashion away from the centre of the body into components or a system of symbols." Accessories have become so dominant, he says, that they can no longer be viewed as "accessories" per se. It's all about financial payback. "Consumers can play with marginal elements and put together a maximum return in terms of change of appearance with minimum expenditure. Producers know the mass market wants luxury but can't afford the entire package, so they sell the bits and pieces which offer greater profit margin."

Taking a broader economic perspective, Semmelhack links shoe height and density to periods of deprivation and war, tracing wedge platforms to the 1930s and '40s when they were made with raffia and cork—inexpensive materials not needed in the war effort. "It could be a simple fashion cycle, but when you look back when platforms were fashionable, it was during World War II, Vietnam, now—there's a definite trend," she says.

Yet the correlate some economists draw between skirt length and economic prosperity is not as straightforward when it comes to heel height, Riello says. A more direct link exists between advances in technology and higher heels—in the case of platforms, the challenge is to create a wedge or platform that appears heavy but is light enough to be wearable. Achieving a sense of lightness was a recurring mouf in 20th century shoe design, Riello says, as designers sought to produce women's shoes that were increasingly ephemeral and fragile.

The only fragile element arising from this new crop of clunkers, paradoxically, is the woman who chooses to wear them. "They change the way the body moves," Riello says. "It's not only about dependency but one's posture and way of communicating with the world." In other words, few will be kicking up their heels like the models in *Vogue*.

Riello compares the new platforms with foot binding. "The idea is that you can afford it, that you don't need to walk," he says. "Their impracticality becomes a sign of constrained mobility which can be a negative and a positive. For some people it's a status symbol. The shoe tells you the wearer is doing other things than physical exercise." And this is why, against all odds, the latest footwear is ripe for fetishization: not only does it fetter the foot but, even more provocatively, it allows the imagination to run free. M



WHAT THEY GOT FOR IT.. THOMAS KINKADE HOMES

Houses are being built in Idaho based on the sugary rec-room paintings of U.S. artist Thomas Kinkade. Developers are building lakeview homes that ape the misty visions of the painter of cotteges, whose works hang in 10 million U.S. residences. The real-life cottages sell for US$4 million and are the brainchild of architect Renn Haight, who says: "I've had clients tell me, 'I'd like to have a house like this,' and show me a Kinkade painting. I said, 'Why not?'"

FIRSTVIEW.COM

Doing my two bits for charity



SCOTT FESCHUK

Thank you all for coming. I felt it important to have respected members of the international media and also Geraldo Rivera here for this important announcement.

Inspired in part by the good deeds of one pale, homely software tycoon that I'm still pretty sure I could take, we as a society are entering into a new age of international philanthropy. Accordingly, I am announcing today that I, Scott Feschuk, will be handing over the bulk of my assets to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation—so that the material wealth I have amassed in my lifetime can be invested in good works that will endure through all eternity, or at the very least October.

Let it be said that I have led a charmed financial life. There was that time I won $100 on a scratch lottery ticket. Almost broke even that day! Also, to my knowledge none of my paper money has ever spontaneously combusted. And then there was that other time when the stupid waiter down at Kelsey's totally boned himself and gave me back an extra fiver with my change. Sweet. My point is this: when you are fortunate enough to be taking down Canadian magazine writer money, you have an obligation to give back—to think of those less fortunate than yourself, such as poor people in Africa and Canadian newspaper writers.

YOU NEED HELP TO BUILD A FORTUNE. I STILL RECALL THE SAGE ADVICE OF MY FIRST BROKER: 'COME BACK WHEN YOU HAVE SOME MONEY.'

Let me walk you through some of my more notable assets. As I indicated to Mr. Gates when I talked to the security guard at Microsoft who escorted me off the premises and kept telling me to stop touching stuff, there are no conditions on the use of my gift. I don't want any buildings or sandwiches named in my honour. The act of giving, and the ensuing global media coverage and public adulation (especially from young females), is enough.

According to the most recent financial statements available as to my holdings [*consults crumpled ATM slip from wallet*] I currently possess the sum of $1,291.42 in my chequing account. I'm going to donate that. Well, most of it. There's this cool speaker thing for my iPod that I've got my eye on. But apart from that, and my entry fee for next month's World Series of Boggle at the Tulsa Airport Marriott, it's pretty much all earmarked. (The final cash tally will vary pending the resolution of a disputed late fee at Rogers Video.)

Furthermore, it is my intention to liquidate my highly regarded collection of comic books, sorted alphabetically to reflect the mood I was in when I purchased them—Forlorn, Hungry, Lonely is quite a thick section, Melancholy, etc. This impressive anthology features dozens of editions of *Jughead* that are as many as six years old and has been professionally appraised by Chuck down at the Silver Snail to be valued at, "I don't know, maybe 20 bucks? Listen, I gotta go help this other customer."

I'll also be turning over to the Gates foundation my stamp collection, which consists of eight 51 cent Canadian stamps. What makes this collection stand out is the fact that all the stamps are self-adhesive. You don't even need to lick them! Although if you do, the experience is, from what I recall of it, intense.

Oh, and my friend Ricky owes me fifty and says he's probably good for it, though only if his "bitch girlfriend Connie" hasn't already gone and spent it on another wash-off henna tattoo. Note to the foundation: she probably has.

I also include in this donation any and all of my additional liquid assets, including monies found upon my person and within my premises, although I'm going to have to ask that Bill and Melinda roll the quarters themselves.

Needless to say, I haven't amassed wealth of this magnitude without a great deal of assistance. I remember the sage advice of my first financial adviser, a broker at Edward Jones, who counselled me to "come back when you have some money." Also, I owe a debt of gratitude to TD CanadaTrust, which each month helpfully removes $13 from my account in fees, thus reducing the stress associated with managing one's cash.

All told, if you add my donation to Warren Buffet's recent $37-billion pledge, then charities such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will have *in excess of* $37 billion to spend on worthwhile causes. Not a bad legacy for a couple of generous guys just trying to make a difference in this workaday world. M

Scott Feschuk can be reached at sfeschuk@sympatico.ca



'SHYNESS CAN BE attractive in a woman. It's mysterious,' says one shy man, who feels there is more pressure on men to be outgoing

Why shy people don't listen well

At a support group for the socially anxious, the timid explain what they're really thinking

BY JULIA MCKINNELL • The Shyness and Social Anxiety Support Group of Toronto met on a recent Sunday at the Church of the Resurrection. There were no latecomers. Ten men gathered around a boardroom table. No women were present. An older member had an explanation for that, piping up with the observation that there is more pressure on men to be outgoing. Timid men are frowned upon. Other members chimed in. "Shyness can be attractive in a woman. It's mysterious."

The pre-meeting discussion increased in lightness and gregariousness. The veterans in the group threw in their two cents until the banter peaked at the most rigorous of all conversational challenges: small talk. The weather. Someone's trip to Las Vegas. Very hot in Vegas! It turns out conversations of substance aren't nearly as baffling to the severely shy as mindless chit-chat. That's what brings them to their knees.

The group was formed 2½ years ago with a fellowship of three. The venue was a coffee shop. The facilitator and founder, Rama Fayaz, believes that exposure therapy—appearing in public and mingling with strangers—in conjunction with medication under psychiatric supervision is the best way to cope with acute shyness. When the actual meeting commenced at the church, the members took turns estimating on a scale from one to a hundred how they were feeling. One: relaxed, practically asleep. A hundred: heart palpitations, full blown panic attack. In a seat at the front, meanwhile, the newest attendee stared at the table. No eye contact. He appeared to be listening, taking everything in. Temperature in Las Vegas. Got it. But according to Fayaz, shy people are not always the terrific listeners that extroverts like to think they are. A shy person may not be listening at all.

"Personally, I think part of social anxiety is obsession," says Fayaz. "The mind of the shy person is constantly bombarded by thoughts. We cannot stop the loop that goes on in our mind. 'What does this guy think of me? What is going on? What are they talking about?' They just lose everything." Fear of judgment, Fayaz believes, is at the root of shyness. "It's like we have a big eye following us everywhere. A big eye focusing on us, and everywhere we go it is judging. We always feel we are on the stage. There are lights on us."

Fayaz's mother suffered agoraphobia and when she was younger rarely left the house. Before Fayaz found treatment, his own shyness at university rendered him a recluse. He studied architecture, and would often wait until nightfall to leave the library, then flee campus by taxi under the cover of darkness. "If somebody laughs behind me, I think they are laughing at me," he says. Posing for photographs is enormously unpleasant. "I just freeze in front of the camera. It's a judgment because later you're going to look at it. I've never had a photograph that is natural."

Like most shy people, Fayaz feels more comfortable one on one. He considers himself lucky that his first therapist knew a bit about social phobia. "You have to go amongst people," he was told. "Just go." Says Fayaz: "I had a huge improvement in two years for somebody who couldn't leave my home." Now Fayaz advocates using "distraction" to break the loop of obsession. "Focus totally outside of yourself," he says. "Some people say even touch the objects around you." He demonstrates by rubbing the arm of his chair.

A member tells the group he has begun a new course of medication, a low dosage of the anti-psychotic drug Zyprexa. He noticed a change within days. Last week, his boss gave him a lift home from work. He felt totally at ease, he says. "I was saying things to him like, 'Oh yeah?'"

Drugs such as diazepam are helpful to reduce anxiety for a short period, says Fayaz. "If you are having an interview, you take 10 milligrams of diazepam—in two hours, you won't have any anxiety. You will be very calm." Visualize an interview or meeting beforehand, says Fayaz. "The lights, the room, the colour of the walls. Then rehearse what you are going to do exactly as if you were on stage. Close your eyes. Rehearse the scene again and again and again."

Attendance at the Toronto group varies from week to week. The average turnout is between seven and 13 people. "Any larger," says Fayaz, "and we have to split in two. A large meeting does not help high anxiety." M



MOST IMPROVED KATE MOSS

Say you're a fashion model earning US$7 million a year. And then you're photographed snorting a cocaine-like substance. You'd be ruined, right? At the time, the Swedish clothing chain H&M dumped Moss as its poster girl when the story broke last year about a drug habit. But since then, the notorious Moss has struck new deals with Calvin Klein, Nikon, Virgin Mobile and even tartan sellers Burberry. Moss is expected to make US$18 million this year.

HELEN KING/CORBIS

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A gourmet rat, pot TV, vegan footwear and a musical bathroom in our compendium of things that make life worth living

MY BELL WILL TOLL AT 84

Yes, the premise ("Find out how long you will live") is inelegant. But answer a series of questions at *deathforecast.com* (Do you always wear a seatbelt? Ever had elective cosmetic surgery?), and it tabulates, with a chick, when you'll get your halo.

MAY BECOME HABIT FORMING



Weeds could have been a gimmicky TV show about a pot-dealing suburban mom, except she's played by Mary-Louise Parker, who adds warmth and depth to every role she takes. Season two starts on Showcase, Aug. 30.

ENVIRO WAR GAME

The polar ice sheets have melted. The oceans have risen. Land is scarce, and millions are starving. Armies are raised. It's not an Al Gore voice over, but the conceit behind Antarctica—a new board game from *savvitagames.com*.

RAD COPY

Tired of advertising, Ji Lee (who logged four years at Saatchi & Saatchi) counterattacked—with 30,000 dialogue-bubble stickers slapped on street ads, inviting pen-toting New Yorkers to add their thoughts. The results—"What country would Jesus bomb?" asks a Grand Theft Auto babe—are compiled in the book *Talk Back: The Bubble Project* (*thebubbleproject.com*).





VEGETARIAN FOOTWEAR

MooShoes, contrary to their name, sell shoes that are animal-free. Stylish and affordable, they'll appeal to vegans and fashionistas alike. (*mooshoes.com*)





WHY TAKE THE CAR?

For each adult riding the Via rails this summer, an accompanying child aged 11 years old or younger travels for free. (*viarail.ca*)

DOWNLOADING?

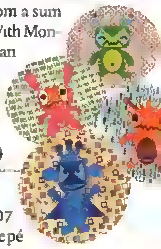
Designed to "enhance your experience in the smallest room," the iCarta, merging an iPod dock (complete with moisture-free speakers) and a toilet paper dispenser, is either "the ultimate accessory," or, ultimately, unnecessary. We're rolling with it. (Available at *atechflash.com* July 21.)

FLAG DAYS

Patriotism is on display at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. Hanging in the lobby is the first Maple Leaf flag (raised in 1965) and the last Red Ensign—alongside Lester Pearson's preferred blue-bordered pennant.

MONSTROUSLY STYLISH

Does your kitchenware look like leftovers from a summer lawn sale? With Monster Plates, you can modernize—and continue to forestall maturity. (*sprouthome stores.yahoo.net*)



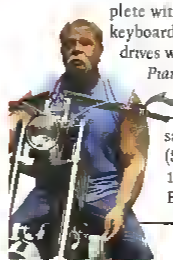


THE SANDWICH OF SUMMER

This BBQ season, go green—with President's Choice Crispy Lettuce Wraps. Made from a romaine and iceberg hybrid, they work well with Thai glazed chicken, teriyaki beef or wok-seared tofu.

PIANO BIKE

When the burly Teutuls from Discovery Channel's *American Chopper* build a bike for Billy Joel, the musician says "no pianos." So that's what son Mikey does, making a spoof bike (complete with mike and keyboard), which he drives while singing *Piano Man*. His comedy is the show's saving grace. (Sunday, July 16 at 8 p.m. ET.)



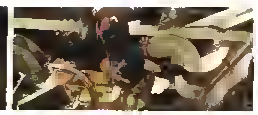
FOUND FUNK

For the first time on CD, the lost soundtrack to *Dolemite*, blaxploitation cult parody *par excellence*. (Think all-girl kung fu squads and a lead whose love-making can kill.) Rudy Ray Moore, whose influence extends from Tom Waits to Snoop Dogg, packed a party-perfect, funk-based punch—with a little Stax-styled soul. (*relapserecords.com*)

NO SACRE MAROON?

The foodie rat in *Ratatouille*—Pixar's summer 2007 offering—might be the first cartoon Parisian *sans* Pepé Le Pew ("Return'mwa this instonce!") accent. Still, the film looks sweet. Watch for colourful shots of the City of Light, and satire loud enough for your kids. (The other rats *actually* eat garbage, geddit?) For a tease, toot de sweet, visit *apple.com/trailers/disney/ratatouille*.





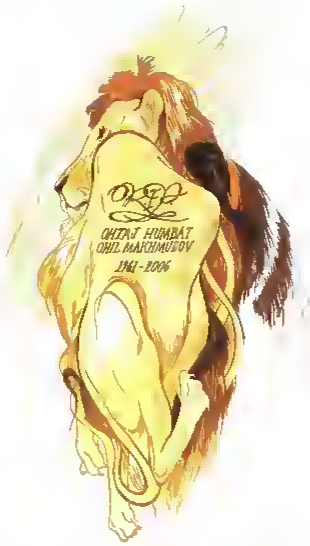
OHTAJ HUMBAT OHLI MAKHMUDOV

1961-2006

A refugee, and a survivor of crime and tragedy who thought God would keep him safe in the lions' den

Ohtaj Humbat ohli Makhmudov was born in 1961 in the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic's Kyudamyrsky region. His father, Humbat, was head of the regional party council of the Communist party. While the large family was quite well off, it experienced many tragedies. Of the eight children, two died while Ohtaj was in his teens—a sister, Aubeniz, in a 1976 gas explosion at the local bathhouse, and a brother, Alih, the following year in a knife fight.

For Ohtaj, though, the future appeared bright. "He was a very good student in high school," says his classmate Azer Husanov, currently living in the Azerbaijani capital of Baku. "He finished in 1979 and was immediately accepted to the National Economics Institute." Ohtaj graduated from the institute with a degree in economics in 1984, and then opened a store in Baku, which he ran for five years. "This happened during the perestroika movement, a time in which people had the opportunity to become successful," Azer says. "And he jumped on this chance."



But the new openness of the Mikhail Gorbachev era in the Soviet Union unleashed other forces as well. Demands by Nagorno Karabakh, a primarily Armenian enclave of the Azerbaijan S.S.R., to unite with the neighbouring Armenian S.S.R. resulted in prolonged bloodshed between Azerbaijanis and Armenians. Ohtaj, whose family had some years before unfortunately relocated to the Tertersky region of Karabakh, decided to move to Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. There, "he married a local woman, who subsequently bore him a son," recalls Ali Damirov, Ukraine representative of the Turan Information Agency, an independent Azerbaijani news service. "Overall, he was quite a simple and quiet person," adds Damirov, who knew Ohtaj since 1989. "I used to see him at the Azerbaijani Centre in Kyiv, which he would occasionally attend on national holidays."

In Kyiv, Ohtaj also tried his hand at the retail business. In the early 1990s, he began trading at the Bessarabsky Market in the city's downtown, and also got involved in wholesale. Ohtaj, Ali says, was doing quite well, expanding his business and opening kiosks in some of Kyiv's other outdoor markets as well. But while friends and acquaintances are reluctant to speak of details, Ohtaj ran into problems with criminal elements in the mid 1990s. "At the time," Ali explains, "racketeering had become a regular modus operandi in this part of the world." That brought further sadness into Ohtaj's family. In 1995 his brother Yaver, who had joined him in Kyiv along with Avuz, another brother, was murdered. Back home, upon hearing the news of Yaver's death, Ohtaj's mother suffered a heart attack, Azer Husanov says.

Shortly after, Ohtaj went bankrupt. His wife subsequently left him, departing with their son for Italy in search of better opportunities—and sending Ohtaj spiralling into depression. "At the end of the 1990s he spent two years in the Pavlov psychiatric hospital in Kyiv and was released in 2000," says Khahani Murmat ohli Huseynov, an Azeri acquaintance of Ohtaj who has been living in Kyiv since the early 1990s. Then tragedy struck again. In 2002, Ohtaj's brother Avuz died in the same psychiatric hospital where he had undergone treatment.

Ohtaj left Kyiv. Aquaintances say that, as far as they know, he went to Tertersky. "What he could have possibly been doing there is not clear," Ali says. "After all, this place is a completely war-torn region." But Ohtaj returned to Kyiv this year, at the end of May. Ali says he took Ohtaj around town, "to show him how things had changed since he left. Although he seemed very indifferent to what he saw, he looked like somebody who had been put through the wringer."

On Saturday, June 3, Ohtaj visited the Kyiv Zoo. According to eyewitnesses, he asked many questions regarding the behaviour of lions and tigers. He returned the next day. At 6:45 p.m., when there weren't many people by the lion exhibit, Ohtaj removed his socks and shoes. He carefully placed them on a cellophane packet, and removed his jacket and hung it on the back of a chair belonging to one of the vendors at the zoo. Ohtaj then tied a piece of rope to a metal handrail and climbed down into the lions' pit.

The lions may not have taken notice of him. But Ohtaj approached the animals, waving his arms and, according to witnesses, shouting, "Because God loves me, the lions will not harm me!" Other visitors screamed at him to get out. But by that time, Ohtaj had drawn the attention of Veronica, one of the zoo's three lionesses. She pounced on Ohtaj. Andriy Bakaj, an investigator from Kyiv's Pechersk district prosecutor's office who examined his body at the scene, said, "The deceased had 10 puncture wounds in his neck, two of which were in the area of his windpipe. He died instantly."

BY VASYL PAWLOWSKY

ILLUSTRATION BY JILLIAN TAMAKI



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